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HISTORY

OF THE

FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE,

COMPRISING

A VIEW OF THE INVASION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE
BARBARIANS.

BY J. C. L. DE SISMONDI.

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PREFACE.

THE longest, the most universal, the most important of all the convulsions to which the human race has been exposed, is that which destroyed the whole fabric of ancient civilization, and prepared the elements out of which the structure of modern social life is composed.

It found men at the highest point of perfection which they had as yet attained to, whether in the career of social organization and of legislation, or in those of philosophy, literature, or art; and hurled them down by reiterated shocks, each more terrific than the last, into the deepest night of barbarism. Its influence embraced all that portion of the human race which had any consciousness of its present condition, any power of preserving the memory of its past existence; consequently, all that portion, whose thoughts have come down to us by means of written records. Dating its commencement from the reign of the Antonines,—the period at which the human race seemed to have reached its highest point of prosperity,—and tracing its progress, through each succeeding shock, to the almost total dissolution of all the old-established associations of men, and to the reconstruction of society from its very foundations, this revolution continued through at least eight centuries.

The Roman empire, which then extended over the whole of what was believed to be the habitable earth, was invaded, ravaged, depopulated, dismembered, by the various tribes of barbarians who rushed in upon all its borders. The conquering nations which had possessed themselves of its ruins, made repeated attempts to found monarchies upon its antique soil. All, after two or three generations, vanished; their imperfect and barbaric institutions were insufficient to the preservation of national life. Two great men arose—Mahommed in the East, Charlemagne in the West,—each of whom tried to put himself at the head of a new order of society. Each of them founded an empire, which, for a time, rivalled the ancient power of Rome. But the moment of reorganization was not yet come. The throne of the Khaliphs, the empire of the Carlovingians, soon crumbled into dust.

The nations of the earth then seemed in a state of general dissolution; the various races of men were intermingled; a violent and short-lived power was seized by kings, dukes, emirs, who were not chiefs of the people, but accidental masters of a fraction of territory whose boundaries were marked by chance alone.

No man could feel that he was bound to any land, as a son to his mother; no man could feel himself the lawful subject of any government; society could no longer afford protection to its members, and could no longer claim their allegiance in return.

At length the moment arrived, in which the proprietors of land built themselves here and there strong holds, in which cities surrounded themselves with walls, in which all men armed for their own defence. Each individual was compelled to take a share of the government into his own hands, and thus to begin society anew from its very elements.

Such was the tremendous revolution which took place between the third and the tenth centuries of our era; and yet, from its very universality and duration, it is impossible to find one common name under which to designate it.

If we would grasp one comprehensive idea of this gigantic catastrophe, we must, so to speak, collect its several incidents into one focus; we must reject all those circumstances which dissipate the attention; we must confine ourselves to the grand movements of each people and of each age; we must show the co-operation of the barbarian conquerors, who were themselves unconscious that they acted in concert; we must trace the moral history of the world, regardless of the details of wars and of crimes; we must seek, in an enlightened appreciation of causes, that unity of design which it were impossible to find in a scene so full of rapid and varied movement. The earlier half of the middle ages appears to our eyes like a chaos; but this chaos conceals beneath its ruins most important subjects for reflection.

After having devoted many years to the study of the revival of European civilization, it appeared to me that a work presenting to the reader the prominent features of this grand overthrow of ancient culture, collected into one picture, would not be without its advantages. Fifteen years have elapsed since I attempted to trace the course of this terrible revolution in a series of lectures, pronounced before a small audience at Geneva. Encouraged by the interest they appeared to excite, I preserved this vast picture, under the idea that, at some future day, I might exhibit it in one of the capitals of the world of letters. Advancing years warn me no longer to reckon on the possibility of oral instruction. Having, moreover, already laid before the public a view of the history of the Italian republics, compressed into one of the small volumes of this series,* I thought that it might be useful to offer this also to a far more numerous class of readers than voluminous works can hope to obtain; and for this purpose to lay before them the results only of more extensive researches.

I then undertook to compress within the limits of this volume, the earlier portion of the history of the Middle Ages: that is, the history of the fall of the Roman empire; of the invasions of the barbarians, and their establishment among its ruins. It is more than the history of the destruction of ancient civilization, or of the first attempts at the reconstruction of society, according to its modern forms;—it is the history of the sufferings of the human race, from the third century of the Christian era, to the close of the tenth.

In this volume, even more than in the one which preceded it, I have been compelled to pass rapidly over events, and to dwell only on results; to abstain from all critical discussion, from all reference to authorities.

I venture to indulge the hope, that among my readers, some will be found, who will examine the labours by which I prepared myself for the composition of this summary. They will see, more especially in the early volumes of the history of the French, that facts and results, which may appear to be lightly asserted or hastily deduced here, have been collected and matured by a long course of conscientious research.

* Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia.

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HISTORY

OF THE

FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

CHAPTER I.

Value of History as illustrative of the moral and political Sciences.—Difficulty and Importance of the Study of those Sciences.—Period of History embraced by the following Work;—The Struggles between the Barbarians and the Romans, the final Destruction of the Empire of the West, and the succeeding dark Ages, down to the Commencement of the eleventh Century.—Extent, Magnificence, and Weakness of the Roman Empire.—Frontier Line of the Roman Territory from the time of Augustus to that of Constantine.—What it included.—Division of the Empire into four prætorial Prefectures.—Enumeration of Provinces.—External Grandeur contrasted with internal Decay.—Want of national Unity.—State of the population.—Enormous Wealth of the senatorial Class.—Miserable and abject Condition of the Peasantry and Slaves.—Decline of Population.—Entire Debasement of the Roman Character.

AMONG the studies calculated to elevate the heart, or to enlighten the mind, few can be classed above that of history, when it is considered, not as a barren catalogue of incidents, persons, and dates, but as an essential part of the great system of moral and political science; as the collection of all the facts and experiments which tend to throw light on the theory of the public weal.

The social instinct, the need of combination, is a necessary consequence of the weakness of man; of his inability to resist, by his own unaided force, all the sufferings and the dangers by which he is perpetually surrounded. He unites with his fellow men to obtain from them that assistance which he offers to them in return; he seeks from them a defence against the infirmities of infancy, old age, and disease; he asks their co-operation in repelling the hostile powers of nature; in protecting the efforts

made by each for his own well-being; in securing the enjoyment of the property he has acquired, the leisure he has earned, and the use he makes of that leisure for the development of his moral existence. Two objects perfectly distinct present themselves to his mind as soon as he is capable of reflecting; first, the satisfaction and happiness he can enjoy with the faculties with which he feels himself endowed; secondly, the improvement of those faculties, and his progress towards a more perfect state of being. He seeks not only to be happy; he seeks to render himself worthy of happiness of a more exalted nature. Happiness and virtue are the twofold end,—first, of all the individual efforts of man; secondly, of all his combined efforts. He seeks in his family, in his class, in his country, the means of making this twofold progress; nor can any association completely fulfil his wishes, unless it place these means within his reach.

The theory of these associations, that theory of universal utility, is what has sometimes been designated as the social science; sometimes denoted by the name of the moral and political sciences.

Considered in its full extension, moral science embraces all that human society can effect for the general advantage, and for the moral development of man: considered in its various branches, we may number among moral and political sciences, constitutional polity, legislation, the science of administration, political economy, the science of war and of national defence, the science of education, and, lastly, the most profound and important of all, that of the moral education of the mature man—religion.

With all these sciences, some of them of a speculative nature, history is inseparably connected, as forming the practical part, the common register of the phenomena, and experiments of all these sciences. We know that the mere name of politics suggests recollections often bitter or afflicting; and that many cannot regard, without a kind of terror, the study of a science which, to their imaginations, is characterized much more by the animosities it has engendered than by the good it has produced.

Before, however, we declare our aversion for political science, let us remember that such an aversion would imply indifference to the happiness, the intelligence, and the virtue of the human race.

On the one hand, it is necessary to discover how the superior intellectual powers and resources of the few can be best employed for the improvement and advantage of all; how virtue can best be honoured, vice most effectually discouraged, and crime prevented; how, even in the punishment of crime, the greatest sum of good can be secured to society, with the greatest economy of evil. On the other hand, it is important to know how wealth is created and distributed; how the physical comforts which that wealth procures can be diffused over the greatest possible number of persons; how it may be made available to their enjoyments;—questions intimately affecting not only the common weal, but the domestic comfort and prosperity; the happiness of the interior of every house and of every family. After such a survey of the topics lying within the domain of political science, who will dare to say that he detests it? who will dare to say that he despises it?

But, is this science, important as it must be admitted to be in its aim, this science so intimately connected with all that is most noble in the destiny of man, is it as unerring as it is important and elevated? Does it really lead us to that goal to which it affects to direct our efforts? Are its principles established in such a manner that they can never be shaken? We must confess that this is very far from being the case. Social science is divided into a great number of branches, each of which amply suffices to occupy the life of the most studious man. But there is not one of these branches in which rival sects have not sprung up; in which they do not contest the first principles on which all their doctrines are founded. In speculative politics, liberals and serviles dispute the fundamental basis of society. In legislation, the schools of law have not been less opposed to each other; the one always looks to what has been, the other, to what ought to be; and, in the countries which have adopted the Roman law, as well as in those which assume custom as the ground-work of their legislation, these two parties are in open hostility. In political economy, contradictory doctrines are maintained with equal warmth as to the very basis of the science; and the two contending parties are not yet got beyond the question, whether the increase of production or of population, be always a good, or whether they be sometimes an evil. In the theory of education, all the means of diffusing instruction, nay, the advantage of instruction itself, are still disputed points; and there are still per-

sons to be found, who recommend ignorance as the surest guardian of the virtue and the happiness of the mass of mankind. The most sublime of social sciences, the most beneficent (when it attains its end,)—religion, is also the most fruitful of controversy and debate; and the hostile sects too often transform a bond of peace and love into a weapon of aggression and hostility. Never, perhaps, were principles more continually and warmly appealed to, in all the social sciences, than in this age; never were principles more misunderstood; never was it more impossible to enounce a single one with the hope of its obtaining universal assent.

This is not the case with regard to the other subjects of our knowledge; physical facts, and the first principles which are deduced from them, are universally established and recognised. In what are called the natural sciences, we proceed from proof to proof; and if some long admitted explanatory theory is sometimes contested, the greater part of the discoveries in the field of physics are not the less safe from all controversy. In fact, in the moral sciences, our doubts are far less directed against the forms of argumentation, than against the facts from which we affect to draw our conclusions. Among these facts there is scarcely one sufficiently firmly established to serve as a ground-work for principles. This is easily accounted for, if we consider, that in the physical sciences the facts are scientific experiments made with a definite purpose, and circumscribed by that purpose: whereas, in the moral and political sciences, the facts are the independent and infinitely varied actions of human beings.

Ought we, however, to suffer ourselves to be utterly discouraged by the afflicting uncertainty which hangs about every part of moral and political science? Ought we, because truth has not yet been demonstrated, to renounce the search after it? Ought we to abandon all hope of finding it? Were we even to wish it, we could not. These sciences are of such daily application to the events and objects of life, that we cannot set a step without recurring to their aid. We may renounce the search after speculative truth, but we cannot cease to act. Since, however, every one of our actions reacts on our fellow men, every one ought to be regulated by the grand laws of human association—by those very moral and political sciences which some persons affect to despise.

When the astronomers of antiquity placed the earth in the

centre of the universe, and made the sun rise and the firmament revolve around it, their error could only extend to paper spheres; the celestial bodies moved on their glorious course, undisturbed by the systems of Ptolemy or of Tycho Brahe. Galileo himself, when compelled by the holy office to abjure his sublime theory, could not help exclaiming, "*Eppur' si muove!*" The inquisition might stop the progress of the human mind, but could not arrest the revolution of the earth. But even were the study of the moral and political sciences utterly prohibited, their practice could not be suspended for a single moment. There are nations in which the theory of government has never formed a subject of reflection or of discussion; but have they therefore found it possible to dispense with all government? No: they have adopted at random some one of the systems which they ought to have chosen after mature deliberation. Whether in Morocco or in Athens, in Venice or in Uri, at Constantinople or at London, men have, doubtless, always desired that their governments should facilitate their way to virtue and to happiness. All have the same end in view, and all act. Must they act without regard to this end? Must they walk without endeavouring to ascertain whether they advance or recede? It is impossible to propose to any sovereign, or to any council, measures, whether political, military, administrative, financial, or religious, from which good or evil will not result to masses of men; which, consequently, ought not to be judged in accordance with social science. Determinations the most multifold, the most important, must be made in one direction or another;—is it necessary they should always be made blindfold? And if we prefer what we have, if we resolve to stop where we are, that also is just as much choice as the contrary line of action. Must we then always choose without knowing why we choose? The social sciences are obscure—let us then seek to throw light upon them: they are uncertain—let us endeavour to fix them: they are speculative—let us try to establish them on experience. This is our duty as men—the law which ought to regulate all our conduct—the principle of the good or the evil we may do: indifference on such questions is a crime.

In order to carry the social sciences to their utmost extent, it is unquestionably necessary to divide them; to direct the whole force of a speculative mind to one single branch, as the only means of pushing the knowledge of details and the concatena-

tion or sequence of principles, as far as human infirmity will permit. A man who sincerely desires the advancement of the science to which he mainly addicts himself, must content himself with excellence in that science;—be it the science of government, of jurisprudence, of political economy, of morals, or of education. But since all men are subject to the operation of the social sciences; since all, in turn, exercise some influence over their fellow men; since all judge and are judged, it is of importance that all should arrive at certain general results: it is of importance that all should understand and appreciate the consequences of human institutions and human actions. These consequences are to be found in history.

History is the general storehouse of the experiments which have been made in all the social sciences. Unquestionably, the physical sciences—chemistry, agriculture, medicine, are experimental; so are legislation, political economy, finance, war, education, religion. Experience alone can teach us how far what has been invented to serve, to unite, to defend, to enlighten human society, to raise the moral dignity of man, or to augment his enjoyments, has attained its end, or has produced a contrary effect.

But there remains an important difference. In the physical sciences we *make* experiments; in the moral and political, we can only wait and watch for them. We must take them such as they have been furnished to us by past ages; we can neither choose nor direct them; for an abortive experiment involves destruction to the virtue and the happiness of our fellow men; and not of a few individuals only, but of thousands or millions of men. We know of but one example of a project for the advancement of political science by means of experiments, undertaken with the express aim, not of the interests of the governed, but of the instruction of the governors.

About the year 260 of the Christian era, the emperor Gallienus, one of those in the long line of Cæsars, who, perhaps, by his indolence and his levity, contributed the most to the ruin of the Roman empire, took it into his head that he was a philosopher; and of course found the high opinion he had formed of his taste and aptitude for science amply confirmed by the testimony of his courtiers: he accordingly resolved to select certain cities of the empire as experimental communities, to be submitted to the various forms of government and polity invented by

philosophers, with a view to the increase of the sum of human happiness. In one, the philosopher Plotinus was commissioned to organize a republic on Plato's model. Meanwhile the barbarians advanced; the thoughtless Gallienus opposed no resistance; and they successively devastated all the countries in which the experimental cities were to be founded. Thus vanished this imperial dream.

Unquestionably, no man has a right thus to make human beings the subject of experiment; yet a Roman emperor might be nearly sure that any theory of any philosopher would be better than the practice of his pretorian prefects, or his governors; and we have reason to regret that Gallienus's singular project was abandoned. But for all, save a Roman emperor, the experimental study of the social sciences can be made in the past alone; there, the results of all institutions stand disclosed before us, though, unhappily, so complicated, so embarrassed in each other, that neither causes nor effects present themselves distinctly to our eyes. Generally, they are severed by a long interval of time; we must look back several generations for the origin of the opinions, the passions, the weaknesses, the consequences of which become manifest after the lapse of ages.

Often, too, these long-existing causes have been inadequately observed, and many are veiled in darkness which it is absolutely impossible to penetrate. But the main source of the confusion and uncertainty which hang around moral or political science is, that several causes always concur to produce one effect; that, frequently, it is even necessary to seek in another branch of political science the origin of a phenomenon which presents itself to us in the one which presently engages our attention. We are struck by the tactics of the Romans; but perhaps it is rather to the education they received from their earliest infancy, than to the perfection of military science, that we ought to ascribe their success in war. We wish to adopt the English trial by jury; perhaps it will be found to be devoid of equity or of independence, if it be not supported by the religious opinion of the country. We talk of the fidelity of the Austrians to their government; perhaps their attachment is not to the government, but to the economical laws which are in force among them. We ought not, therefore, to be surprised if the social sciences are in a backward state; if their principles are uncertain; if they do not offer a single question which has not been the subject of controver-

sy. They are sciences of fact, and there is not a single one of the facts on which they are founded which some one is not disposed to deny. They are sciences of observation; and how few are the accurate or complete observations which have as yet been collected for the purposes of induction. We ought rather to be surprised that men should hate and insult each other for what they understand so imperfectly. There is, perhaps, not one denomination of a sect, whether in politics, philosophy, or religion, which has not, at some time or other, become a term of reproach. There has not been one opinion, of the many held on subjects so difficult, so complicated, by men who had no other end in view than the good of their species, which has not in turn been anathematized, and the profession of it treated as evidence of dishonesty and vice. Poor apprentices as we are in the theory of social existence, how dare we to affirm that the adoption of this or that principle proves a corrupt heart, when we cannot even demonstrate that it shows an error of judgment? Let us study: thus only shall we learn the extent of our ignorance. Let us study; and by learning to appreciate the difficulties, we shall learn to conceive how they may have given birth to systems the most widely opposed.

History, however profoundly studied, will still, perhaps, leave us in doubt as to the rules which ought to regulate our own conduct, or our share in the general conduct of society, of which we are members; but it will leave us none as to the boundless indulgence we owe to the opinions of other men. When we see that science is so complicated; that truth is so far removed from us, so shrouded from our ken; that every step in our work offers fresh difficulties to our investigation, raises fresh questions for solution; when we are not sure of our own footing, how shall we pronounce sentence on those who differ from us?

Our purpose in the following work is not to establish any particular system; not to maintain or to demolish any set of opinions, principles, or institutions; but honestly to demand of the past an account of what has existed, and of the causes which have combined to bring it into existence. The portion of history of which we shall endeavour to give a rapid sketch is, indeed, more rich in instructive warnings than in glorious examples.

In the first two centuries of the Christian era, the known world was united under an almost universal monarchy, and seemed to have within its reach all the fruits of the highest civi-

lization to which antiquity had attained. Commencing our researches at this period, we shall endeavour to point out the germs of destruction which this immense body contained within itself. We shall then give a brief view of the mighty struggle between the barbarians and the Romans, and shall show the empire of the West crumbling to pieces under reiterated strokes. The barbarians then endeavoured to reconstruct what they had destroyed. The Merovingian Franks, the Saracens, the Carolingian Franks, and the Saxons, laboured in turn at the establishment of a universal monarchy. Their efforts contributed still farther to the dissolution of the ancient order of society, and buried civilization under the ruins. The empires of Dagobert, of the Khalifs, of Charlemagne, and of Otho the Great, fell in succession before the end of the tenth century. These great convulsions at length destroyed the tendency which mankind seemed to have preserved toward the reconstruction of a universal monarchy. At the end of the tenth century, human society had resolved itself into its primary elements—associations of citizens in towns and cities. We shall take our stand at the year 1000, on the dust of the successive empires of antiquity. That is the true epoch whence modern history ought to date.

The period of barbarism and destruction which we design to examine is little generally known. The greater number of readers hasten to turn their eyes from so dark and troubled a picture; nor, through its whole duration, does it afford a single author worthy to be placed on the same rank with the great writers of antiquity. The confusion of facts; our incurable ignorance concerning a great number of details, concerning some entire periods, concerning many of the causes which gave rise to the most important revolutions; the absence of philosophy, often of good sense, in those who relate events; the enormous number of crimes by which this period is deformed, and the extremity of wretchedness to which the human race was reduced, unquestionably detract much from the interest which its history might otherwise excite. These circumstances ought not, however, to deter us from endeavouring to obtain a more accurate knowledge of it.

Indeed, the period which it is our intention to consider is much more nearly allied to our own than that which we are accustomed to study with the greatest ardour. It is nearer to us, not only in the order of dates, but also in that of interests. We are the children of the men whose history and character we are about to

examine: we are not the descendants of the Greeks or of the Romans. With them arose the tongues we speak; the laws which we have obeyed, or whose authority we still acknowledge; the opinions, the prejudices, more powerful than laws, before which we bow, and which will, perhaps, retain their dominion over our latest posterity. The nations and tribes who will pass in review before us, professed the Christian religion; but in this respect the difference is far more striking than the resemblance. The centuries which elapsed from the fourth to the tenth are those in which the church was the most deeply affected by the fatal influences of ignorance, of increasing barbarism, and of worldly ambition. In them we can hardly trace a vestige of the pure religion we now profess. The direction given to the education of youth, the study of a language then expiring and now no longer in existence, and of the master-works it contained, date from the same epoch; as do also the establishment of various universities and schools, which keep alive in Europe the spirit of past ages. Lastly, it was at that period that the states of modern Europe, many of which still subsist, were constructed out of the ruins of the Roman empire. We are about to watch the birth of the nations to which we are bound by the various ties of blood and interest.

The fall of the Roman empire in the West is the first spectacle that presents itself to us, and is pregnant with instruction. Nations or tribes which have attained to a like degree of civilization perceive that a certain kindred subsists between them. The life of a private citizen in the time of Constantine or of Theodosius has a greater resemblance to our own than that of our barbarous ancestors of Germany, or than that of those virtuous and austere citizens of the republics of Greece and Italy, whose works we admire, but of whose manners we have a very imperfect knowledge. It is only by acquiring an accurate conception of the resemblance and the difference between the organization of the empire and that of modern Europe, that we can venture to foretell whether the calamities by which the former was destroyed, menace us with ruin.

The mere name of the Roman empire calls up in our minds every image of grandeur, power, and magnificence. By a very natural confusion of ideas, we bring together the most remote, and often dissimilar times, to concentrate around it a halo of splendour and glory. The Roman republic had produced men

who, in moral dignity and force, were, perhaps, never surpassed on earth. They had transmitted their names, if not their virtues, to their descendants; and even to the very close of the empire, the men who, sunk in slavery and baseness, still called themselves Roman citizens, seemed to live in the midst of their shades, and to be encompassed by the atmosphere of their glory. The laws had changed their spirit; but the changes had been slow, and scarcely perceptible to the people: the manners were no longer the same; but the memory of the antique virtue of Rome still survived. The literature had been preserved with the language; and it established a community of opinions, of emotions, of prejudices, between the Romans of the time of Claudian and the contemporaries of Virgil. The magistrates and officers of the state had, generally speaking, preserved their ancient names and insignia, although their power had fled. And nine hundred years after the institution of the consulates, the people of Rome still respected the fasces of the lictors, who preceded the consul, habited in the purple of his office.

From the time of Augustus to that of Constantine the world of Rome was bounded by nearly the same frontiers. The god Terminus had not yet learned to recede, and still guarded the ancient boundaries, as in the days of the republic. To this there was but one exception. Dacia, conquered by Trajan, lying to the north of the Danube, and without the natural limits of the empire, was abandoned, after being held for a century and a half. But the aggressive warfare which the Romans of the first century were continually pushing beyond their frontiers, was, in the fourth, almost invariably retaliated upon them within their own territory by the barbarians whom they had formerly attacked. The emperors could no longer defend the provinces which they still affected to rule; and they frequently saw, without regret, valiant enemies become their guests, and occupy the desert regions of their empire.

This fixedness of the boundaries of the territory subject to Rome, was in part to be ascribed to the sagacity with which, at the period of her highest power, her leaders had voluntarily stopped short in the career of conquest, at the point where they found the best military frontier. Great rivers, which afford little obstacle to the armies of civilized nations, are generally a barrier against the incursions of barbarians; and great rivers, the sea, mountains, deserts, formed, in fact, natural frontiers to this immense empire.

According to a vague calculation, it has been asserted that the Roman territory measured six hundred leagues from north to south, upwards of a thousand from east to west, and extended over a surface of a hundred and eighty thousand square leagues. But the idea conveyed by numbers is too abstract to leave any distinct picture on the mind. We shall understand more clearly the immense extent of its possessions in the richest and most fertile countries in the world, by following the line of its frontiers. On the north, the empire was bounded by the wall of the Caledonians or Picts, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Black Sea. The Picts' wall, which transected Scotland at its narrowest point, left the Romans in possession of the Lowlands of that country, and of the whole of England. The Rhine and the Danube, which rise at nearly the same point, and take their course, the one to the west, the other to the east, separated barbaric from civilized Europe. The Rhine formed the frontier of Gaul, which then comprised Helvetia and Belgium. The Danube covered the two great peninsulas of Italy and Illyricum. It divided countries, some of which are now regarded as Germanic, others as Slavonic. On its right bank the Romans possessed Rhætia, Noricum, Pannonia, and Mœsia; which answer pretty nearly to Suabia, Bavaria, part of Austria and of Hungary, and Bulgaria. The narrow space between the sources of the Danube and the Rhine, above Basel, was defended by a line of fortifications. The Black Sea protected Asia Minor. To the north and east, a few Greek colonies preserved a doubtful sort of independence, under the protection of the empire. A Greek prince reigned at Caffa, on the Cimmerian Bosphorus. Greek colonies in the countries of Lazica or Colchis were alternately subject or tributary. The Romans possessed the whole southern bank of the Black Sea, from the mouths of the Danube to Trebisond.

On the east, the empire was bounded by the mountains of Armenia, by a part of the course of the Euphrates, and by the deserts of Arabia. One of the loftiest mountain-ranges of the globe, the Caucasian, stretching from the Black Sea to the Caspian, touching Thibet at one extremity, and at the other the mountains of the centre of Asia Minor, separated the Scythians of Upper Asia from the Persians and the Romans. The wildest part of these mountains belonged to the Iberians, who maintained their independence. The part the most susceptible of cultivation was inhabited by the Armenians, who submitted alternately to the yoke of the Romans, the Parthians, and the Persians, but

as tributaries rather than as subjects. The Tigris and the Euphrates, which rise in the Armenian mountains, and empty themselves into the Persian Gulf, flowed through the plains of Mesopotamia. Along the whole of this part of the eastern boundary, down to the sandy deserts which, farther to the south, divide the banks of the Euphrates from the fertile hills of Syria, the frontiers of the empire had not been traced by the hand of nature; and we accordingly see the two great monarchies of the Romans and of the Parthians, or their successors, the Persians, alternately wresting from each other several of the provinces of Armenia or of Mesopotamia. The deserts of Arabia formed the defence of Syria along a line of two hundred leagues, while the Red Sea bounded Egypt.

To the south, the deserts of Libya and Zahāra, to the west, the Atlantic Ocean, were at once the limits of the Roman empire and of the habitable globe.

Having traced the frontier line of the empire, we will pause for a moment over the catalogue of the provinces of which it consisted. About the year 292, Diocletian had divided it into four pretorian prefectures, with a view to provide better for its defence, by giving it four heads or leaders. These prefectures were Gaul, Illyricum, Italy, and the East. The residence of the prefect of Gaul was at Trèves. He had under his orders the three vicars of the Gallic provinces, Spain, and Britain. The former were divided, according to the ancient language of the inhabitants, into Narbonese, Aquitanian, Celtic, Belgic, and Germanic Gaul. Spain was divided into three provinces, Lusitania, Bætica, and Tarraconia. Lastly, Britain comprehended the whole island, as far north as the Friths of Forth and Clyde.

The Illyrian prefecture consisted of that immense triangle of which the Danube is the base, and the Adriatic and the Ægean and Euxine seas the two sides. It comprehended nearly the whole existing empire of Austria, and the whole of Turkey in Europe. It was divided into the provinces of Rhætia, Noricum, and Pannonia; Dalmatia, Mœsia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece. The prefect resided at Sirmium, not far from Belgrade and from the Danube, or at Thessalonica.

The prefecture of Italy included, besides that province whence the conquerors of the world had sprung, the whole of Africa, from the western frontiers of Egypt to the present empire of Morocco. The provinces bore the names of Libya, Africa, Numi-

dia, Cæsarian, Mauritania, and Tingitanian Mauritania. Rome and Milan were alternately the residence of the prefect of Italy, but Carthage was the capital of all the African provinces. It equalled Rome in population as well as in magnificence; and in the time of their prosperity, the African provinces alone were more than equal to three times the territory of France.

The prefecture of the East, bounded by the Black Sea, the kingdom of Persia, and the Desert, was yet more extensive, more wealthy, and more populous than either of the others. It contained the provinces of Asia Minor, Bithynia, and Pontus; Cilicia, Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine; Egypt, with a part of Colchis, of Armenia, of Mesopotamia, and of Arabia. The residence of the prefect was at Antioch, but several other capitals, particularly Alexandria, in Egypt, almost rivalled that city in population and in wealth.

The imagination is confounded by this enumeration of the provinces of Rome; by the comparison of them with any existing empires; and our astonishment is heightened when we call to mind the vast and splendid cities by which each of these provinces was adorned; cities, several of which equalled, if they did not surpass, our largest capitals in population and in opulence; cities such as Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, within whose walls a whole nation seemed enclosed. The Gallic provinces alone numbered one hundred and fifteen towns, distinguished by the name of cities. The ruins of some are yet standing, and surpass all those of modern times in magnificence.

The aspect of these ruins still excites our admiration, even when we meet with them in provinces where they are not associated with any glorious recollections. At Nismes we behold the *Maison carrée*, the Arenæ, the Pont de Gard, with reverential emotion. With the same feelings, we visit the remains of Roman grandeur at Arles and Narbonne: yet what do we find there, except models of art? No great historical recollections are attached to them: these noble edifices were raised at a time when Rome had lost its liberty, its virtues, and its glory. When we succeed in fixing the date of their construction, we find it during the reigns of emperors whose names have been handed down to the execration of all successive generations.

Nevertheless, these monuments, even in the most remote provinces, the most obscure cities, still bear the antique Roman stamp—the stamp of vastness and magnificence. Moral habits

and impressions are sometimes perpetuated in works of art, even after they are obliterated from the soul of the artist. Even at the latest periods of the decline of the empire, the Roman artist lived, surrounded by the time-hallowed witnesses of the past, which kept him in the right path; he felt himself compelled to work for eternity. He continued to impress on his creations that character of power and durability, which give them a pre-eminence over all that have succeeded them. The imposing architecture of Rome has a strength and a grandeur which remind us of that of Upper Egypt. It differs from that, however, in its object: the Egyptians laboured only for their gods—the Romans, even during the period of their enslavement, worked mainly for the people. All their great edifices were evidently intended for the enjoyment of all. In the times of the republic, the chief object was the public utility, to which the aqueducts and magnificent roads of that period were destined to contribute. In the days of the empire, it was rather the public pleasure that was consulted: the result was, circuses and theatres. Even in the temples, the Egyptian architect seems to have thought only of the presence of the Deity—the Roman, of the adoration of the people.

In the midst of all this magnificence, the empire, whose fall we are about to contemplate, was lingering in its fourth century of incurable decay. The north poured down upon it her flood of warriors. From the extremity of Scandinavia to the frontiers of China, nation after nation appeared, the new pressing upon the older-settled, crushing it, and marking its onward passage with blood and devastation. The calamities which afflicted the human race at that period exceed, in extent of desolation, in number of victims, in intensity of suffering, all that has ever been presented to our affrighted imagination. We dare not calculate the millions upon millions of human beings who perished before the downfall of the Roman empire was accomplished. Yet its ruin was not caused by the barbarians: it had long been corroded by an internal ulcer. Various causes had, doubtless, contributed to destroy, among the subjects of the Cæsars, the patriotism of the people, the military virtues, the opulence of the provinces, and the means of resistance. But we shall now confine ourselves to an endeavour to elucidate those which arose from the state of the population; since upon that must repose every system of national defence.

That sentiment so pure, so elevated, that public virtue which

sometimes soars to the highest pitch of heroism, and renders the citizen capable of the most noble sacrifices; that patriotism which had long been the glory and the power of Rome, found no food in the empire of the world. An edict of Caracalla (A. D. 211-217) had rendered common to all the inhabitants of the empire, not only the prerogatives, but the titles and the duties, of a Roman citizen. Thus the Gaul and the Briton were nominally the fellow-citizens of the Mauritanian and the Syrian; the Greek and the Egyptian, of the Spaniard and the Hun. It is evident, however, that the more such a fagot is enlarged, the looser is the tie that binds it. What glory or distinction could attach to a prerogative become so common? What recollections could be awakened by the name of country? a name no longer endeared by any local image, by any association of ideas, by any participation in all that had thrown radiance and glory around the social body?

Thus national recollections, national feelings, were obliterated in imperial Rome. They were feebly replaced by two distinctions between the inhabitants of the empire; that of language, and that of rank.

Language is the most powerful symbol to a nation of its own unity; it is blended with every association of the mind; it lends its colour to every feeling and to every thought; it forms an indivisible part of our memory, of all that has made us love life, of all that has taught us to know happiness. When it reveals to us a fellow-countryman in the midst of a strange people, it makes our heart beat with all the emotions of home and fatherland. But, so far from serving as a bond of union between the citizens of the Roman empire, language only served to sever them. A great division between the Greek and the Latin soon placed the empires of the East and of the West in opposition. These two tongues, which had already shone in the zenith of their literary glory, had been adopted by the governments, by the wealthy classes, by all who pretended to education, and by most of the citizens of the great towns. Latin was spoken in the Gallic prefecture, in Africa, Italy, and half of the Illyrian prefecture, and along the Danube; Greek, in all the southern portion of the Illyrian prefecture, and throughout the prefecture of the East.

But the great mass of the royal population, except in spots cultivated exclusively by slaves brought from a distance, had preserved its provincial language. Thus, Celtic was spoken throughout Amorica and the island of Britain; Illyrian, in the

greater part of Illyricum; Syrian, Coptic, Armenian, in the several provinces whence these languages had taken their names. Where the people were the most enslaved and oppressed, they made the greatest efforts to learn the language of their masters; the latter, on the contrary, had to make the advances, where the people were the most numerous and strong. Throughout the empire, however, there was a continual shifting of the population, from the immense traffic in slaves, from the military service, and from the pursuit of civil offices. Hence, every province presented, in the lower classes, the strangest mixture of various *patois* and dialects. Thus, in Gaul, we know that, towards the end of the fifth century, Saxon was spoken at Bayeux, Tartarian in the district of Tifauge in Poitou, Gaelic at Vannes, Alan at Orleans, Frankic at Tournai, and Gothic at Tours; and every century affords a fresh combination.

But it is more especially in the condition of individuals, that we must seek the causes of the extreme weakness of the Roman empire. We may distinguish six classes of inhabitants. First, we shall find senatorial families, proprietors of immense territories and immense wealth, who had successively encroached on the possessions of all the smaller landed proprietors. Secondly, the inhabitants of large towns, a mixture of artisans and freed slaves, who lived on the luxury of the rich, and shared in their corruption; who made themselves formidable to the government by their revolts,—never to the enemy by their valour in the field. The inhabitants of small towns, poor, despised, and oppressed. The husbandmen and the slaves, who tilled the fields. Lastly, a sort of banditti, who, as a means of escaping from oppression, betook themselves to the woods, and lived a life of brigandage.

The higher classes of a nation may impress upon the government a character of wisdom and virtue, if themselves are wise and virtuous; but they cannot give it strength, for strength must always come from the mass. But, in imperial Rome, this mass, so varied in its language, its manners, its religion, its habits; so savage in the midst of civilization; so oppressed and brutified, was scarcely perceived by those who lived on its toils: it is hardly mentioned by historians; it pined in wretchedness; it perished and disappeared in some provinces, while no one condescended to notice its extinction; and it is only by a series of comparisons that we can discover its fate. In the present state of Europe, the class of husbandmen—those who live by the manual labour

of agriculture,—forms four-fifths of the whole population, England alone excepted. We may conclude that, in the Roman empire, the agricultural population was proportionally larger, since manufactures and commerce were in a less advanced state than with us. But, whatever were their numbers, they formed no part of the nation. They were regarded as scarcely superior to the domestic animals whose labours they shared. The higher classes would have dreaded to hear them pronounce the name of country: dreaded to call forth their moral or intellectual faculties; above all, that courage which they might have turned against their oppressors. The peasantry were rigorously deprived of arms, and were incapacitated from contributing to the defence of their country, or from opposing resistance to any enemy, foreign or domestic.

The rural population of the empire was divided into two classes, free *coloni* and slaves; differing, however, far more in name than in any positive rights. The former cultivated the earth for certain fixed wages, generally paid in kind; but, as they were severed from their masters by an impassable distance; as they were immediately dependent on some favourite slave or free-man; as their complaints were unheard, and the law afforded them no security, their condition became more and more deplorable; the payment exacted from them more and more ruinous: and if, rendered desperate by misery, they abandoned their fields, their dwellings, their family, and fled to take refuge under the protection of some other proprietor, the constitutions of the emperors had provided a summary process by which they could be reclaimed, and seized wherever they were found. Such was the condition of the free cultivators of the soil.

The slaves were again subdivided into two classes; those who were born on their master's estate,—and who, having, consequently, no other place of abode, no other home or country, inspired a larger share of confidence,—and those who had been purchased. The former lived in huts, in the farm-buildings or homesteads, under the eyes of their inspector or bailiff, nearly like the negroes on a West India estate. But, as their numbers were continually decreasing from bad treatment, from the avarice of their superiors, from misery and despair, a continual and active trade was carried on throughout the empire to recruit them from among the prisoners of war. The victories of the Roman arms,—frequently, also, the conflicts of the barbarians

among each other, or the punishments inflicted by the emperors or their lieutenants on revolted cities or provinces, the whole population of which was sold under the spear of the prætor,—kept the market constantly supplied with slaves; but at the expense of all that would have been the most valuable part of the population. These wretched beings worked almost constantly with chains on their feet: they were worn down with fatigue, in order to crush their spirit, and were shut up nightly in subterraneous holes.

The frightful sufferings of so large a portion of the population, its bitter hatred against its oppressors, produced their natural consequences; continual servile insurrections, plots, assassinations, and poisonings. In vain did a sanguinary law condemn to death all the slaves of a master who had been assassinated; vengeance and despair multiplied crime and violence. Those who had already satisfied their revenge, those who had failed in their attempt to do so, but over whose head suspicion hung, fled to the forests and lived by rapine and plunder. In Gaul and Spain they were called *Bagaudæ*, in Asia Minor they were confounded with the *Isauri*; in Africa with the *Gætuli*, who pursued the same course of life. Their numbers were so considerable, that their attacks frequently assumed the character of civil war, rather than of the violences of a band of robbers. They were like the *Marroons* of the West India Islands. By their irruptions they aggravated the miseries of those who were lately their companions in misfortune. Whole districts, whole provinces, were successively abandoned by the cultivators, and forest and heath usurped the place of corn and pasture.

The wealthy senator sometimes obtained compensation for his losses, or the aid of the authorities in defence of his property; but the small land-owner, who cultivated his own field, could not escape amid so much violence and outrage. His fortune and his life were in continual danger. He hastened, therefore, to get rid of his patrimony at any price, whenever he could find an opulent neighbour willing to buy it; nay, he frequently abandoned it without any compensation. Often he was driven from it by fiscal exactions, and the overwhelming weight of the public charges. Thus, the whole of this independent class, among whom love of country exists in peculiar force and intensity, whose vigorous arm is best able to defend the soil it tills, was soon entirely extirpated. The number of proprietors diminished to such a de-

gree, that an opulent man, a man of senatorial family, had often a distance of ten leagues to traverse before he could reach the habitation of a neighbour and equal. Some of them, proprietors of whole provinces, were accordingly already regarded as petty sovereigns.

In the midst of this general desolation, the existence of large cities is a phenomenon not easily explained; but we find the same extraordinary state of things in our own times, in Barbary, Turkey, throughout the East;—wherever, in short, despotism crushes isolated man, and where he can only find safety from outrage by losing himself in a crowd. These great cities were, in a great measure, peopled by artisans, who were subjected to a very rigorous yoke; and by freed-men and slaves; but it is to be remembered, that they also contained a greater number of persons who were satisfied with bare necessities, provided they could pass their time in utter indolence, than are to be found in our days. The whole of this population was, like the peasantry, disarmed; was equally deprived of the feeling of country; was rendered equally fearful of the enemy; equally incapable of self-defence. But, as it was congregated into a mass, it commanded some respect from those in power. In all the cities of the first class, there were gratuitous distributions of provisions, and gratuitous games, chariot races, and theatrical exhibitions. The levity, the love of pleasure, the forgetfulness of the future, which have always characterized the populace of large cities, clung to the provincial Romans through all the final calamities of the empire. Trèves, the capital of the Gallic prefecture, was not the only city which was surprised and pillaged by the barbarians, while its citizens, crowned with chaplets, were rapturously applauding the games of the circus.

Such was the interior of the empire at the beginning of the fourth century; such was the population called upon to resist the universal invasion of the barbarians, who often left them no other choice than that of dying with arms in their hands, or dying like slaves and cowards. And the descendants of those haughty and daring Romans, the heirs of such high renown, acquired by so many virtues, had been so enfeebled, so debased and degraded by the tyranny to which they had been subjected, that, when this alternative was offered them, they constantly preferred the death of cowards and of slaves.

CHAPTER II.

Three first Centuries of the Roman Empire.—From the Battle of Actium to the Reign of Constantine.—Uninterrupted Progress of Decay.—These three Centuries divided into four Periods: 1. of the Julian Race; 2. of the Flavian; 3. of the Soldiers of Fortune; 4. of the Colleagues, or Co-emperors.—State of Rome under the Julian Family.—Limits of the Empire nearly unchanged.—Military Force.—Arts.—Literature.—Degraded State of the People.—Virtuous Emperors of the Flavian Race.—Opulence and Splendour of the Provincial Cities.—Increasing Disproportion between the Wealth of the few and the Misery of the mass.—Rapid Diminution of Population.—Difficulty of recruiting the Armies.—Death of Commodus.—Commencement of third Period.—Tyranny and Rapacity of the Prætorians.—Civil Wars.—Assassinations.—Successful Invasion of Barbarians.—Judicious Military Elections.—Diocletian.—Division of the Empire by him into four Prefectures, governed by two Augusti and two Cæsars.

IN the preceding chapter we have endeavoured to show what was the condition, what were the internal circumstances, of the Roman empire at the beginning of the fourth century; but, in order to the understanding of the events which followed, it will be necessary briefly to recall to the memory of our readers by what steps, by what series of revolutions, the empire reached that point of decline of which we have tried to convey some idea. The space assigned to this work will render it necessary to condense into one chapter three centuries and a half of the existence of the civilized world; three centuries and a half prolific in great events and in great men, many of whom have, probably, already a powerful hold on the imagination of our readers. In a work professedly treating of the middle ages, it is impossible to trace the long decay of the empire which preceded the reign of Constantine, since that reign must be the point from which we start. Perhaps, however, by strongly marking the epochs of this long history, by classifying the events and the princes which give it its character and its direction, by thus reviving the recollections which are associated in the minds of our readers with their earlier studies, we may succeed in enabling them to embrace with a glance the period which we must leave behind us, but which exercised a powerful influence over that which we are about to follow out in greater detail.

The power of an individual had been definitively established

over the Roman world by the victory which Octavius, better known under the name of Augustus, obtained over Marc Anthony at Actium, on the second of September in the year 723 of Rome—thirty years before the birth of Christ. Constantine the Great, with whom we shall begin our narrative, was invested with the purple in Gaul, A. D. 306; but he was not acknowledged by the whole empire until the year 323—three hundred and fifty-three years after the battle of Actium.

During this long space of time, the feebleness and exhaustion of the Roman empire made gradual and uninterrupted progress. This empire, which had threatened the whole earth with subjugation, which had united civilization to extent, wealth to military virtue, talents to strength, advanced towards its downfall, but with unequal steps; its infirmities were not always the same, and the calamities which threatened it changed their character and aspect. It suffered alternately from the two extremes of the excess and the dissolution of power: it paid the penalty even of its prosperity. Without minutely following the history of its domestic tyrannies, or its foreign wars, let us endeavour to trace this change in its character in the series of events.

These three centuries and a half may be divided into four periods, each of which had its peculiar vices, its characteristic weaknesses; each of which contributed, though in a different manner, to the grand work of destruction which was going on. We shall designate them after the names or the characters of the chiefs of the empire; since the whole power of Rome was then lodged in the hands of those chiefs, and they were in fact the sole representatives of that republic whose name still continued to be vainly invoked. The first period is that of the reign of the Julian family, from the year 30 before Christ, to the year 68 after his nativity. The second is marked by the reign of the Flavian family, which, by its own influence, and afterwards by adoption, kept possession of the throne from the year 69 to 192. The third is that of the soldiers of fortune, who alternately wrested the sceptre from each other's hands, from the year 192 to the year 284. The fourth is that of the colleagues who divided the sovereignty, without dissolving the unity of the empire, from the year 284 to the year 323.

The Julian family is that of the dictator Cæsar; his name was transmitted, by adoption, out of the direct line, but always within the circle of his kindred, to the five first heads of the Roman

empire; Augustus reigned from the year 30 B. C. to the year 14 of our era; Tiberius, from 14 to 37 A. D.; Caligula, from 37 to 41; Claudius, from 41 to 54; Nero, from 54 to 68. Their names alone, with the exception of the first, concerning whom there still exists some diversity of opinion, recall every thing that is shameful and perfidious in man,—every thing that is atrocious in the abuse of absolute power. Never had the world been astounded by such a variety and enormity of crime; never had so fatal an attack been made on every virtue, every principle, which men had been accustomed to hold in reverence. Outraged nature seemed to deny to these men the power of perpetuating their race; not one of them left children; nevertheless, the order of succession among them was legitimate, according to the meaning now given to that word. The first head of that house had been invested with supreme power by the sole depositaries of the national authority, the senate and the people of Rome; after him the transmission of the sovereignty was always regular, conformable to the laws of inheritance, recognised by all the several bodies of the state, and was not disputed by any pretender to the crown. The adoptive son, occupying in every respect the place of the natural son, was admitted, without hesitation or opposition, to the place of his father.

During this period of ninety-eight years, the limits of the Roman empire remained nearly unchanged, with the sole exception of the conquest of Great Britain in the reign of Claudius. Military glory had overthrown the republic and raised up the dictatorship; the attachment of the soldiery to the memory of the hero who had led them on to battle, had founded the sovereignty of his family; but Augustus and Tiberius, heirs of the greatest military power which the world had ever known, distrusted, while they caressed, this instrument of their supremacy: they owed all their power to the army; they feared only the more to owe their ruin to it. They wanted the selfish, and not the generous, passions of the army. They dreaded the virtuous enthusiasm which is easily excited among large bodies of men; they took care to economize both the heroism and the victories of their legions; nor would they give them leaders whose example or whose approbation they might prefer to the largesses of their emperors. Augustus and Tiberius would not attempt what the Republic would have accomplished,—what Charlemagne effected with far inferior means,—the conquest and civilization of Germany.

They thought they had done enough when they had protected their territory with a strong military frontier, against neighbours who regarded war as a virtue; they bequeathed to their successors all the dangers of attack and invasion.

At this epoch, the military force of the Roman empire consisted of thirty legions. The complement of each, including its auxiliaries, levied from among the allies of Rome, was 12,500 men, among whom were reckoned 6000 men of that admirable infantry of the line, so heavily armed, yet so easily disposable, which had achieved the conquest of the world: a corps of Roman cavalry, 726 strong, was attached to it: the rest was composed of auxiliary troops, and wore the arms of the several countries which furnished them. In time of peace, the legions did not inhabit towns or fortresses: they occupied intrenched camps on the principal frontiers, where no civil occupation was ever suffered to interfere with the great profession of arms; where the exercises imposed on the legionary soldier, to fortify his body and keep him in full activity and vigour, had always war for their object; and where the severity of discipline was never relaxed. Three of these legions were stationed in Britain, south of the Caledonian wall; five in Rhenish Gaul; eleven on the Danube, from its source in Rhætia down to its mouth in the Black Sea; six in Syria, and two in Cappadocia, for the defence of the Persian frontier. The pacific provinces of Egypt, Africa, and Spain, had each but one legion. Italy and the city of Rome, on the tranquillity of which the safety of the emperor depended, were kept in awe by a body of 20,000 soldiers, distinguished from the rest of the army by higher pay, by the emperor's peculiar favour, and by immunity for every license. They were called the Prætorian Guard; they were encamped without the gates of Rome, and never quitted the prætorium or the residence of the emperor. The aggregate of the legions formed an army of 375,000 men. Including the prætorians, the entire military establishment of the empire, at its greatest power, never exceeded 400,000 men.

The domination of the Julian family was disastrous to Rome, to the senators, to all men distinguished for opulence, for moral elevation, for ambition, or for attachment to the memory and the fame of their forefathers; disastrous to all the antique virtues of Rome, to all noble sentiments and aspirations, which it crushed and stifled for ever. But the provinces, rarely visited by the

emperors, never invaded by the barbarians, enjoyed all the advantages of peace, of an immense commerce, of easy and safe communication, of laws generally equal and just. In times of which the memory is almost exclusively odious and shameful for the capital, the population of the recently acquired provinces—of Gaul and Spain, for instance, which had been almost devastated or reduced to slavery at the time of their conquest—rapidly recovered and increased in strength and numbers. It was at this and the subsequent period that most of those stately cities which adorned the provinces were built or enlarged; that the arts of Rome and of Greece were borne by commerce to the ends of the empire, and that the monuments which still excite our wonder, which throw a lustre over spots unconsecrated by any glorious recollections, bridges, aqueducts, circuses, theatres, were undertaken or constructed. The subjects of Rome sought to drown all thought of the future; to forget crimes which did not reach themselves; to sever themselves from a country of whose chiefs they could not think without blushing; to deter their children from entering on any public career, where they would be beset by dangers, and to enjoy the advantages offered them by arts, opulence, and leisure.

Republican sentiments were still cherished by all the men who possessed the public confidence and esteem. We find them in all their pristine energy in the poet Lucan, in the historian Tacitus, in the jurisconsult Antistius Labeo. The name of republic, which had been preserved; the laws and customs of ancient Rome, many of which still subsisted, rendered it impossible to speak of the past otherwise than with reverence. Nevertheless, for a century, during which four execrable men filled the throne, one of whom was an idiot, and two madmen, not one important battle was fought for the recovery of freedom,—no revolt,—no civil war. The reason for this is, that the love of liberty was confined to the higher aristocracy. The senators knew how to die with sufficient courage to save themselves from infamy; but they could make no resistance. The people of Rome, almost entirely fed by the largesses of the emperors, continually amused and intoxicated by shows and games, looked on the successive fall of the heads of the illustrious men they had feared or envied, as another variety of exhibition: the people of the provinces, strangers to the antique liberty, perceived no difference between the republic and the empire; the army, confounding fidelity to a

standard with the duty of citizens, and blind obedience with patriotism, attached themselves to the Julian family with implicit and unhesitating devotion. The excesses of the fury and frenzy of Nero at length brought about its fall; but its power was, even then, so firmly established, that it was the attachment of the soldiery to the extinct race of the Julii which enkindled the first civil war: they would neither have the republic, nor the emperor chosen by the senate. As no law nor usage existed determining the succession to the sovereignty, the supreme power was necessarily the prey of the strongest or the most dexterous. Each army wished to invest its own chief with the purple. Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and other less fortunate pretenders, struggled for supremacy; but the habits of subordination were still so strong, that, after this storm, which endured scarcely eighteen months, every thing returned into its wonted order; and the senate, the provinces, the armies, obeyed the conqueror Vespasian, as they would have obeyed one of Julian blood.

We have designated the second period of the empire by the name of the Flavian family—the family of Vespasian. The nine emperors who were successively invested with the purple, in the space of the 123 years from his accession, were not all, however, of Flavian race, even by the rites of adoption, which, in Rome, was become a second nature; but the respect of the world for the virtues of Flavian Vespasian induced them all to assume his name, and most of them showed themselves worthy of such an affiliation.

Vespasian had been invested with the purple at Alexandria, on the 1st of July, A. D. 69: he died in 79. His two sons reigned in succession after him; Titus, from 79 to 81; Domitian, from 81 to 96. The latter, having been assassinated, Nerva, then an old man, was raised to the throne by the senate (A. D. 96—98.) He adopted Trajan (98—117;) who adopted Adrian (117—138.) Adrian adopted Antoninus Pius (138—161;) who adopted Marcus Aurelius (161—180;) and Commodus succeeded his father, Marcus Aurelius (180—192.) No period in history presents such a succession of good and great men upon any throne: two monsters, Domitian and Commodus, interrupt and terminate it; the virtues of their fathers could not save them from the corrupting effect of an education received at the foot of a throne. It is worthy of note, that the natural succession gave but one single virtuous man to the empire of the world;—

Titus, surnamed the delight of mankind, whose short reign, however, hardly afforded a sufficient trial of his character. All the others were called to the throne by a glorious election, sanctioned by the rites of adoption, by which the prince consulted the public voice, and voluntarily transmitted his sceptre to the most worthy.

History throws little light on this period. Abroad, the enterprises of the Romans were confined to some wars against the Parthians, which produced no permanent change in the frontiers of the two empires; to the wars of Trajan beyond the Danube, (A. D. 102—107,) in which he conquered Dacia, now Wallachia and Transylvania; and to the wars of Marcus Aurelius against the Quadi and the Marcomanni, who had succeeded in forming a confederation of the whole of Germany, for the purpose of attacking the Roman empire.

The pillars of Trajan and of Antonine, which are still standing and covered with bas-reliefs, are monuments of these two glorious expeditions. At home, the attention of historians was exclusively directed to the imperial palace; and they had only to commemorate the virtues of the sovereign, and the happiness of the subjects. This happiness, the result of universal peace, of equal protection, equal security for all, was, doubtless, great, and has been often celebrated. One symptom of it was a fresh dawn of literature; feeble, indeed, compared with that of the age which has lent its glory to the name of Augustus, though it derived all its splendour from men formed during the latter years of the republic. The reign of Adrian was peculiarly marked by the flourishing state of art; those of the Antonines, by great ardour in the cultivation of philosophy. Yet in these 123 years, history records few acts of public virtue, few noble or distinguished characters.

This was the period at which, more especially, the provincial cities attained the highest pitch of opulence, and were adorned with the most remarkable edifices. Adrian had a strong taste for the arts, and for all the enjoyments of life; he was continually travelling through the provinces of his vast empire; he excited emulation among the several large cities and the wealthier citizens; and he carried to the farthest extremities of the Roman dominions that luxury and taste for decoration which, before his time, was the exclusive distinction of those magnificent cities which seemed the depositories of the civilization of the world.

But it was during this same period that peace and prosperity

fostered the colossal growth of a few fortunes; of those *latifundia*, or vast domains, which, according to Pliny the elder, were the destruction of Italy and of the empire. A single proprietor gradually became possessed of provinces which had furnished the republic with the occasion of decreeing more than one triumph to its generals. While he amassed wealth so disproportionate to the wants of a single man, he cleared all the country he got within his grasp, of that numerous and respectable class of independent cultivators, hitherto so happy in their mediocrity. Where thousands of free citizens had formerly been found ready to defend the soil they tilled with their own hands, nothing was to be seen but slaves. Even this miserable population rapidly diminished, because its labour was too expensive; and the proprietor found it answer better to turn his land into pasture. The fertile fields of Italy ceased to supply food for their inhabitants; the provisioning of Rome depended on fleets, which brought corn from Sicily, from Egypt, and from Africa: from the capital to the uttermost provinces, depopulation followed in the train of overgrown wealth; and it was in the midst of this universal prosperity, before a single barbarian had crossed the frontiers of the empire, that the difficulty of recruiting the legions began to be felt. In the war against the Quadi and the Marcomanni, which was preceded by so long a peace, Marcus Aurelius was reduced to the necessity of enrolling the slaves and the robbers of Rome. The frontier provinces, those most exposed to the attacks of the barbarians, those which suffered the most from the presence and the military vexations of the legions, did not suffer so much from the rapid decline of population, and of the warlike virtues, as the more wealthy provinces of the interior. The levies of troops were no longer made in Rome; they were raised almost exclusively in northern Gaul, and along the right bank of the Danube. This long Illyrian frontier, in particular, for more than two centuries preserved the reputation of furnishing more soldiers to the empire than all the rest of the provinces combined. This border country had offered little temptation to the cupidity of Roman senators: they cared not to have their property in a province constantly harassed by the enemy. The land which the senators would not buy, remained in the possession of its old proprietors; there, consequently, a population, numerous, free, robust, and hardy, still maintained itself. It long furnished the army with soldiers; it soon supplied it with chiefs.

History, which, during the whole of this period, rarely fixes our attention on any individual, has, however, celebrated the virtues, and still more the munificence, of a subject of the Antonines, Herodes Atticus, consul in the year 143. He lived almost constantly at Athens, in philosophical retirement. Several of the monuments with which he adorned the cities situated in the midst of his immense domains, are still standing: they give us some idea, not only of the liberality, but of the wealth of a Roman of that period: and every province contained some citizen who resembled Herod in magnificence. Adrian appointed him prefect of the free cities of Asia. He obtained from that emperor a grant of 3,000,000 drachmæ (100,000*l.*) for the construction of an aqueduct at the city of Troy; but, to render it more magnificent, he doubled the sum from his own private fortune. At Athens, where he presided over the public games, he built a stadium of white marble, 600 feet in length, and of sufficient size to contain the whole body of the people. Shortly afterwards, having lost his wife Regilla, he consecrated to her memory a theatre which was unmatched through the whole extent of the empire. The only timber used was cedar, which was exquisitely carved. The Odeon, built in the time of Pericles, had fallen into ruin: Herodes Atticus rebuilt it, at his own cost, in all its ancient splendour. Greece was likewise indebted to him for the restoration of the temple of Neptune, in the isthmus of Corinth; for the construction of a theatre at Corinth; for a stadium at Delphi; a bath at Thermopylæ; and Italy for an aqueduct at Canusium. Many other cities of Epirus, Thessalia, Eubœa, Bœotia, and Peloponnesus, were likewise adorned through his liberality. We cannot refuse the tribute of praise due to this illustrious citizen, but we must pity the country where such fortunes can be accumulated; where one man of enormous wealth, and thousands of dependent slaves, must have taken the place of millions of men, free, happy, and virtuous.

The tyranny of Commodus, the last of the Flavii, his vices and his abominations, were punished by the domestic assassination which delivered the world of a monster. But with his death (December 31, 192) commenced the third and most calamitous period; that which we have characterized as the period of upstarts—soldiers of fortune, who usurped the imperial power. It lasted ninety-two years, A. D. 192—284. During that time thirty-two emperors, and twenty-seven pretenders to the empire, al-

ternately hurled each other from the throne by incessant civil warfare. It was during this period that we find the prætorians putting the sovereignty of the world to auction; the legions of the East and of the West disputing the fatal honour of decorating with the purple the chiefs who soon perished by assassination; men taken from the lowest ranks of society, without genius, without education, raised by the brutal caprice of their comrades above all that the world had been accustomed to hold in reverence. Such was the Moor Macrinus, who, in 217, succeeded to Caracalla, whom he had caused to be assassinated. Such was the Goth Maximin, distinguished only by his gigantic stature, his ignorance, his strength, and his brutality; who was, in like manner, the assassin and the successor of Alexander Severus, (A. D. 255.) Such was the Arab Philip, a robber by education and profession, and raised to the throne by the murder of Gordian.

When an absolute monarch is hurled from the throne in consequence of his tyranny, and dies without natural heirs, their exists neither law nor public opinion according to which the transmission of power may be regulated; there is no authority generally recognised as legitimate. Force alone decides; and what force has raised, force is just as likely to overthrow. Despotism, therefore, gives a character of greater distrust and greater cruelty to civil war, and to those who direct it; since it eradicates every feeling of duty which might serve as a protection to themselves or to their adversaries. Ninety-two years of nearly incessant civil war taught the world on what a frail and unstable foundation the virtue of the Antonines had reared the felicity of the empire. The people took no share whatever in these intestine wars; the sovereignty had passed into the hands of the legions, and they disposed of it at their pleasure; while the cities, indifferent to the claims of the pretenders, having neither garri-sons, fortifications, nor armed population, awaited the decisions of the legions without a thought of resistance. Yet their helpless and despicable neutrality did not save them from the ferocity or the rapacity of the combatants, who wanted other enemies than soldiers, richer plunder than that of a camp; and the slightest mark of favour shown by a city to one pretender to the empire, was avenged by his successful competitor by military executions, and often by the sale of the whole body of the citizens as slaves.

The very soldiers were sometimes weary of their own tyran-

ny. They had not a single Roman settlement; no memory of liberty or of the republic; no reverence for the senate or for the laws. Their sole notion of legitimate government was the inheritance of power; but, during this disastrous period, every attempt to return to the principle of hereditary succession was calamitous. To that, the empire owed the ferocity of Caracalla, son of Septimius Severus (A. D. 211—217;) the pollution of Heliogabalus, his nephew (A. D. 218—222;) and the incapacity of Gallienus, son of Valerius (A. D. 253—268.) The name of Gallienus is associated with the shameful period in which Rome, heretofore the terror of the barbarians, began to tremble before them. The legions, enfeebled, and reduced to less than 6000 men, had been withdrawn from the frontiers, and opposed to each other in continually renewed conflicts. Their discipline was utterly destroyed; their leaders neither merited nor obtained their confidence. After a defeat, it was found impossible to recruit the army; at the moment of an attack it was with the greatest difficulty they could be induced to march. The barbarians, witnesses of this anarchy and of these conflicts, no longer beholding on their frontiers those formidable camps of legions which had so long held them in awe, as if by common consent, made incursions at all points at once, from the extremities of Caledonia to those of Persia.

The Franks, a new confederation of Germanic tribes, who had established themselves near the mouths of the Rhine, ravaged the whole of Gaul, Spain, and a part of Africa, from the year 253 to 268. The Allemanni, another new confederation, established on the Upper Rhine, traversed Rhætia, and advanced as far as Ravenna, pillaging Italy in their course. The Goths, after driving the Romans out of Dacia, pillaged Mœsia, massacred 100,000 of the inhabitants of Philippopolis in Thrace; then, spreading along the coasts of the Euxine, ventured upon this unknown sea in vessels they had taken from maritime towns, plundered the cities of Colchis and Asia Minor, and at length penetrated, by the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, into Greece, which they laid waste from one extremity to the other. At the same time, the Persians of the new dynasty of the Sassanides menaced the East. Sapor (or, according to Persian pronunciation, Shah Poor,) had conquered Armenia. The emperor Valerian, father and colleague of Gallienus, marched to meet him in Mesopotamia. He was defeated and made prisoner in the year 260. The

Persian monarch then ravaged Syria, Cilicia, and Cappadocia; and his progress was only arrested on the confines of Arabia, by Odenatus, the wealthy senator of Palmyra, and his wife, the celebrated Zenobia.

This first universal discomfiture of the Roman arms, coming after such unrivalled power and success, gave a blow to the empire from which it never recovered. In all their invasions, the barbarians preserved the recollection of the long terrors and the long resentment with which the Romans had inspired them. Their hatred was still too fresh and fervent to allow them to show any pity to their vanquished foes. Till then they had seen nothing of the Romans but their soldiers; but when they suddenly penetrated into the midst of these magnificent and populous cities, at first they feared that they should be crushed by a multitude so superior to their own; but, when they saw and understood the cowardice of these enervated masses, their fear was changed into the deepest scorn. Their cruelty was in proportion to these two sentiments, and their object was rather destruction than conquest. The population, which had been thinned by the operation of wealth and luxury, was now farther reduced by that of poverty. The human species seemed to vanish before the sword of the barbarians. Sometimes they massacred all the inhabitants of a town; sometimes they sent them into slavery, far from the country of their birth. After such calamities, fresh fears, fresh oppression, fresh miseries, effectually checked the growth of the population. Vast deserts formed themselves in the heart of the empire, and the wisest and most virtuous of the emperors endeavoured to entice new colonies to settle there.

The military elections, however, which had brought the empire into so perilous a condition, at length furnished it with defenders. The formidable armed democracy which had consulted only its cupidity or its caprice, in investing its unworthy favourites with the purple, so long as its sole object was to share the spoil of the state; when its own safety was threatened, its own existence compromised, together with that of the empire, had at least a distinct perception of the sort of merit which might avail to save it. Without great military talents it was impossible to gain the esteem of the Roman army, even in its decline. When the soldiers wanted great men, they knew where to find them; and, to keep the barbarians in check, they at length made elections which did them honour.

It was the soldiery that elected Claudius (A. D. 268—270,) who obtained so great a victory over the Goths, and for a time saved the empire; Aurelian (A. D. 270—275,) who re-established the unity of power, and crushed all rival pretensions to the throne, which had divided the army and the provinces; who subjugated the East, and led captive that Zenobia who had carried Greek civilization to Palmyra, and had accustomed Arabs to triumph over Romans and Persians. It was the soldiery that chose Tacitus, whose virtues were manifest even in a reign of six months (A. D. 275;) Probus (A. D. 276—282,) who defeated nearly all the German tribes in succession, and drove them out of Gaul and the provinces of the Danube. Lastly, it was the soldiery who gave the crown to Diocletian, who put an end to this long period of anarchy. This succession of great captains sufficiently proved that valour was not extinct; that military talents were still at command; and that the soldiers, when they really wished to save the state, were no bad judges of the qualities demanded by the public weal.

But such a succession of invasions and civil wars, so much suffering, disorder, and crime, had brought the empire into a state of mortal languor, from which it never revived. The necessities of the state had increased with its dangers. The impoverished provinces were compelled to double the taxes, which had been too heavy for them even in their greatest prosperity; survivors were obliged to pay for the dead. The distress and despair which urged the peasantry to abandon their land and seek refuge in flight, constantly increased, and the deserts spread with frightful rapidity. The wise and victorious Probus was reduced to the necessity of re-peopling his provinces with the enemies he had subdued, and of recruiting his legions with captives. He transported a colony of Vandals into England; he planted Gepidæ on the banks of the Rhine; Franks on those of the Danube; other Franks in Asia Minor, and Bastarnæ in Thrace: but, though he took care to place each barbarous nation at an immense distance from its home, with very few exceptions they soon disdained the enjoyments of civilized life which were offered them, and the lands which were allotted to them; they revolted, plundered the unarmed natives of the province, crossed the empire in every direction, and, at length, regained their natal soil. The most daring of these rebellions was that of the Franks settled on the Euxine. They seized some vessels in a port of

the Black Sea, descended the Hellespont, pillaged Greece and Sicily, sailed through the Straits of Cadiz, and, after laying waste the coast of Spain and Gaul, landed in Friesland amid their kindred tribes.

Probus had likewise required from the Germans an annual levy of 6000 recruits, whom he incorporated into the different legions. It was his endeavour, as he said, that the Roman should feel the aid of the barbarian, but should not see it. But a disgraceful succour cannot long be concealed. The Roman saw that the barbarian was capable of occupying his place in the camp, and gladly threw aside his buckler. By a scandalous decree, Gallienus had forbidden the senators to serve in the army; nor did one of them, either during his reign or that of his successors, ever protest against this degrading exclusion, though it deprived them of all share in the administration of public affairs, and of all chance of ascending the throne. From that time the highest class of society ceased to be respected by others, or by itself. It sought only to lose all thought of the evils which beset the state, in vice and dissipation; luxury and effeminacy increased with the public calamities; and those whom fate threatened with the most intense sufferings, sought no better preparation for them than in the most shameful pleasures.

We have, at length, come to the fourth period, the last of those into which we divided the history of the empire—that of the colleagues who shared the sovereignty from the year 284 to the year 328. It is shorter than those which preceded it, and we shall, therefore, pass over it more briefly; the rather, that a part of this period will require our attention hereafter.

Diocletian, who was proclaimed emperor by the army of Persia, on the 17th of September, 284, was an Illyrian soldier, whose parents were slaves, and who had probably been a slave himself in his youth. This man, whose own strength had enabled him to ascend from the most abject to the highest station in society, proved to the world that he was still more distinguished for the vigour of his genius, the prudence of his counsels, his empire over his own passions and over the minds of others, than by his personal bravery. He felt that the empire, decrepit and tottering on its ancient base, required a new form, a new constitution. Neither his servile birth, his education, nor the examples he saw around him, were of a kind to inspire him with much esteem for men. He expected little from them. He did not

even appear to understand that liberty which had once inspired the Romans with such heroic valour. All the recollections of the republic were degraded and defaced, nor did he attempt to turn them to any advantage: he saw nothing but the danger of the invasion of barbarians; he thought of nothing but the means of resistance; and he organized a military government, strong, prompt, and energetic. But he reflected that the head of such a government was placed, by his very isolation, by the immense distance that severed him from all other men, in a situation of peculiar peril; and that community of interest, combination for mutual defence, was the basis of all security. He, therefore, associated with himself colleagues in whom he hoped to find defenders in time of danger, and avengers if he fell. Thus he founded a despotism on that balance of power which is the essence of free government.

To this end he traced that division of the empire, which we have already described, into the four great prefectures of Gaul, Illyricum, Italy, and the East. He intrusted the administration of the two most peaceful, rich, and civilized, Italy and the East, to two Augusti, while two Cæsars were called to defend Gaul and Illyricum. He offered the two Cæsars, as a definite and legitimate object of ambition, the succession of the two Augusti, to whom they were bound by rites of adoption. All the armies being thus attached to his system, and commanded by his colleagues, he had no longer to dread revolt. He gave them a new organization and new names; he strengthened their discipline, while he made some concessions to the degeneracy of the age, by lightening their armour and increasing the proportion of the cavalry and light infantry to the infantry of the line. With these new armies he drove the barbarians beyond the frontiers at all points, and once more rendered the empire formidable. Diocletian reserved to himself the government of the East. He established his court, not at Antioch, though that was the capital of the prefecture, but at Nicomedia on the Propontis, nearly opposite the spot on which Constantinople was afterwards built. He affected an oriental splendour, which was neither in keeping with his soldier-like habits, nor with the vigour of his mind and character. He gave Italy to Augustus Maximian, an Illyrian peasant like himself, and his old companion in arms, whom he commissioned to humble the senate and city of Rome. Cæsar Galerius was charged with the government of Illyricum, and Cæsar

Constantius Chlorus with that of Gaul. Despotism, which trains men to regard all resistance as a crime, or as a dangerous revolt, renders them cruel and sanguinary. The soldier-like education of Diocletian and his colleagues, the rank whence they had been elevated, the habit of seeing blood flow, increased this ferocity. The government of the colleagues was stained with numerous executions; but the character of these acts of violence was not the same as that of the atrocities of the earlier Cæsars. In Tiberius and his successors, we find that cruelty which is almost invariably united with cowardice and effeminacy; in Diocletian and his colleagues, that ferocity which the lower orders of the people often display in their abuse of power. Maximian and Galerius had preserved all the habits of brutal and illiterate peasants. Severus and Maximin, who were afterwards joined to them in power, were from the same class. Constantine Chlorus alone belonged to a more distinguished family, and in him we find proofs of more humane sentiments.

It was much more the indignation which all resistance, all independence of mind, excite in tyrants, than any superstitious prejudice, that induced Diocletian and his colleagues to set on foot a violent persecution of the Christians. The new religion had spread in silence, and had made considerable progress throughout the Roman empire; though it had hardly excited the attention of the government, or that of the Roman historians, who, during the three first centuries, seem hardly to have remarked its existence. It had had no share in the revolutions, no public or political influence; the philosophers had not thought it worth their while to engage in controversies with obscure sectaries. The priests of the ancient gods were doubtless indignant at seeing their altars neglected by a set of men who were daily becoming more numerous; but these priests did not form a body in the state. Those of each divinity thought they had separate interests; they had little influence, and small means of injuring. The first persecutions, therefore, as they are called, were little more than random acts of violence, extending to few victims, and over a short space of time. But when brutal soldiers, impatient of all opposition, had been invested with the purple, and when order had been sufficiently re-established throughout the empire for them to perceive all that transgressed the limits of despotism, they were indignant at the existence of a new religion, as a violation of uniformity of obedience. They

looked upon it much more as a breach of discipline, than of piety; and they persecuted the Christians, not as enemies to their gods, but as rebels to their own authority. The more absolute they were, the more exasperated were they at that new power of the soul which rendered it insensible to pain, triumphant in torture; which calmly and unresistingly rose above the reach of their power. The struggle between the fury of despotism and the heroism of conviction, between executioners and martyrs, is worthy of eternal remembrance. It endured, with little interruption, up to the end of the fourth period, or the union of the whole empire under Constantine.

Diocletian, as if to secure the perpetuity of the system of government of which he was the author, determined to become, as it were, witness of his own succession. In his four-headed despotism he had reckoned on what he had found in himself—the ascendancy of superior genius over ordinary men. So long as he retained the purple, he was the real, the only head of the government. When he resolved to retire from the world, and to call the two Cæsars, Galerius and Constantius Chlorus, to the places of the Augusti, he had sufficient influence over his colleague, Maximian, (though by no means disgusted with power,) to induce him to lay aside the purple at Milan, on the 1st of May, 305, at the same time that he himself resigned it at Nicomedia. With a strength of mind which absolute sway had not enfeebled, he confined himself for nine years within the narrow enclosure of private life, without evincing a regret; and found in the care of his garden at Salona, a serenity and content which he had never known as emperor. But, from the time of his retirement, the division of the sovereign power brought about its ruin. During the republic, the consuls had shared the command of the armies without jealousy, because both were subject to a superior power—that of the senate and the people. In like manner the colleagues of Diocletian had always felt that in him alone resided the whole majesty of ancient Rome; but as soon as they recognised nothing above themselves, they thought only of their personal greatness; and the remainder of the fourth period, as we shall contemplate it during the reign of Constantine, was a scene of perpetual tumult and intestine warfare.

CHAPTER III.

Barbarians anterior to the Fourth Century.—Review of the Barbarous Nations bordering on the Roman Territory.—1. Barbarians of Africa; Berberi, Gætuli, Moors.—2. Of Asia; Arabs.—Splendour of Palmyra.—Zenobia.—Parthian Empire.—Revolt of the Persians.—Their imperfect Civilization.—Armenians.—Scythians, or Tartars.—Their unaltered Character.—Warlike Habits of Nomadic Tribes.—Overthrow of the Empire of the Huns by the Sienpi, Cause of their Migration westward.—Alans.—Taifalæ.—3. Barbarous Nations of Europe.—Three great Tribes, Celts, Slavonions, Germans.—Extent of Territory, Habits, and Religion of the Celts.—Slavonic Tribes.—Germanic Tribes.—Influence of their Manners and Institutions on modern Europe.—Their Superiority to the other Races.—Character and Habits.—Attachment to Freedom.—Political Institutions.—Kings.—Popular Assemblies.—Reverence for Women.—Religion.

WE have endeavoured, as far as was consistent with the narrow limits prescribed to us, to place before our readers the condition and progress of that part of the human species over which civilization had been diffused by the Greek and Roman arms. This vast population was subject to laws still in force in our own tribunals; it had begun to acknowledge the religion we still profess; it studied, and strove to imitate, the same master-pieces of literature and art which are still the objects of our highest admiration; in the culture of the mental faculties it pursued a system from which we have not widely deviated. Even the manners of the large cities of the Roman empire had considerable resemblance to our own.

We must now transfer our attention to another important portion of mankind:—to that which was included under the common denomination of barbarian; and which, at a period whose events we are about to trace, utterly overthrew that government which the civilized world had so long obeyed. From the time of this great revolution, a new race of men took possession of the regions we now inhabit, bringing with them other laws, other religious opinions, other manners, other notions of the perfection of man, and, by consequence, of the ends to be sought in education. The intermixture of the two races was not accomplished till after long sufferings, nor without the destruction of a great part of that progress towards improvement which mankind had

made during a course of ages. It was, however, this intermixture which made us what we are: we are heirs of the double inheritance of the Romans and the barbarians; we have engrafted the laws, institutions, manners, and opinions of the one race on those of the other. If we would know ourselves, we must go back to the study of our progenitors; of those who transmitted to us their culture, no less than of those who sought to destroy it.

It is not our object to pass in review the various tribes of the whole civilized world; we shall confine our attention to those who came into collision with the Roman world; who were preparing to appear as actors in the terrible drama we are about to behold. We shall have very few names of illustrious individuals, very few dates, with which to encumber the memory of our readers. The state of savage man must be studied as part of the natural history of the species; but it is subject to few diversities, or those diversities are of a kind easily to elude our observation. History begins with civilization. So long as man has to struggle with physical wants, he concentrates his whole attention on the present; for him there is no past, no memory of events, no history. Not only the migrations of tribes, the virtues, the errors, or the crimes of their leaders, are not handed down from age to age; their internal policy, their manners, even at the moment of their coming in contact with civilized nations, are very imperfectly, often very unfaithfully, represented. The barbarians did not describe themselves; they have left no record of their own sentiments, or of their own thoughts; and those who have described them saw them through the medium of their prejudices. In order to introduce some arrangement into our remarks on the barbarous nations which contributed to the overthrow of the Roman empire, we shall follow the frontier line of that empire; setting out from the southern point, and proceeding eastward and along the north. We shall thus pass in review the border nations of Africa, Asia, and Europe. We shall begin with the nations which exercised the least influence over the destinies of Rome, and end with the most important. Following this order, we find the Gætuli, the Moors, the Arabs, the Persians, the Armenians, the Nomadic or shepherd tribes of Tartary, and the three main stems or races of ancient Europe, the Celtic or Keltic, the Slavonic, and the Teutonic or Germanic.

The most obscure and feeble among the neighbours of the em-

pire were the tribes inhabiting Africa south of the Roman provinces: on this frontier, as well as on all the others, the Romans had begun by imposing a tribute on the border countries, in order to keep their kings in a state of dependence: then, after accustoming them for some time to obedience, they incorporated the whole people with the empire. Caligula reduced Mauritania to the condition of a Roman province; and, under the reign of the emperor Claudius, the Romans founded colonies up to the verge of the great desert. One of the most southerly of their cities, Salée, situated in the present kingdom of Morocco, was exposed to frequent incursions of wild elephants: wild beasts were, indeed, almost the only enemies they had to fear on this frontier; for the Roman power extended nearly as far as the habitable country: generals, and men of consular dignity, had penetrated into all the gorges of Mount Atlas. The wandering troops of Berbers, of Gætuli, or of Moors, alone traversed the deserts, as merchants or as robbers. Some cultivated the oases, which, watered by some perennial spring, rose like verdant islands in the midst of the sands; others, with their camels laden with ivory, and often with slaves, crossed the Zahara, and established a communication between Nigritia and the Roman province. Without fixed dwelling-places, without regular government, they remained free because they were wanderers. The Romans had not conquered them because they could not conquer nature. They asked of them only the ivory and the citrons with which their caravans were laden; the murex which the Gætuli gathered on their rocks; the lions, tigers, and all the monsters of Libya, which were taken at great cost to Rome and the other great cities of the empire, for the savage combats of the amphitheatre. A very active trade penetrated much farther into central Africa than that of the Europeans of the present day. Pliny expresses his wonder that, although so many merchants continually traversed these regions, so many Roman magistrates had penetrated as far as Mount Atlas or the desert, he had found it difficult to collect any thing relating to the country but fables.

But the Africans did not always remain at so respectful a distance, nor in so pacific an attitude. In proportion as the oppression of magistrates, the weight of taxation, and the disasters of the empire, thinned the population of the Roman province, the Moors and the Gætuli poured down from Mount Atlas, or issued forth from the desert, and drove their flocks and herds to

feed in the neglected fields. Constantly armed, but still timorous; regarding property as a usurpation, and civilization as a foe; professing no religion but vengeance, and denying the right of their enemies to exercise over them a judicial restraint which they would not tolerate from their own chiefs, they plundered the more remote and unprotected lands, and, when they found resistance, fled. They regarded the punishment of their robberies as a wrong and an insult to their nation; and waited in silence the opportunity of taking ruthless revenge. Their depredations gradually became more formidable, and drove the Romans nearer and nearer to the coast. At the commencement of the fourth century, Mauritanian princes had begun to form anew small tributary states between Carthage and the desert, and civilization had almost disappeared at the foot of Mount Atlas, while the people still remained in a state of subjugation.

Egypt was, likewise, girt round by savage tribes, who had sought the freedom of the wilderness within the boundaries of the Roman territory. The Nasamonian Moors approached the western bank of the Nile, the Arabs the eastern; and the two races were hard to distinguish. Abyssinia and Nubia, which, two centuries later, were converted to Christianity by the Egyptians, had, at the time we are treating of, little communication with the Romans. Egypt was by much the most southerly of the Roman possessions; one of its largest cities, Syene, was situated under the tropic of Cancer. The prodigious monuments of its early civilization, on the origin of which history affords us no light, are found mingled with remains of Roman art. For the first time, the works of the masters of the world appeared petty and contemptible by the side of temples whose construction passes our comprehension. Lower Egypt had adopted the language and manners of Greece; Upper Egypt preserved the use of the ancient Egyptian tongue—the Coptic; and the deserts of Thebais already concealed in their inhospitable wastes a new and strange nation—a nation barbarous in aspect and in manners; from which women and the joys of domestic life were banished; perpetuated only by the misanthropy or the fanaticism of its neighbours. St. Anthony, an illiterate peasant of the Thebais, had retired into the desert, to a distance of three days' journey from the habitable country. He chose a spot where a living spring supplied him with drink, and depended on the charity of his neighbours for food: he lived more than a century

(from A. D. 251, to A. D. 356.) Before his death, 5000 monks, following his example, had retired into the deserts of Nitria. They took vows of poverty, solitude, prayer, dirt, and ignorance; they entered with passion into theological disputes; and their irruptions, in which they enforced their dogmas with clubs and stones, much more than with arguments, disturbed the tranquillity of the capital of Egypt before it was exposed to the attacks of the barbarians.

The great peninsula of Arabia, lying between Egypt and Persia, was imperfectly known to the Romans: this region, four times as extensive as France, was not formed by nature to sustain a numerous population, nor to admit of a state of civilization resembling our own. The Romans kept up some communication through it with India, but left to the Arabs the toil and peril of conducting caravans through the desert. They saw with amazement a nation permanently combining trade with pillage; they already designated by the name of Saracens those daring robbers who issued from the desert and infested the plains of Syria, forming a cavalry unmatched in the world, especially for the indomitable ardour and the docility of their horses. But they did not guess the qualities which lay dormant in the Arab character; qualities which we shall see in full strength and activity three centuries later, when this nation girded itself up for the conquest of the world.

It was in the midst of these deserts, 500 miles from Seleucia, on the Tigris, one of the largest cities of Persia, 200 miles from the frontiers of Syria, that the city of Palmyra arose, as if by enchantment, in a fertile country, watered by plenteous springs, and thickly studded with waving palms. Immense plains of sand surrounded it on all sides, serving as a barrier against the Parthians and the Romans, and pervious only to the caravans of the Arabs, who exchanged the treasures of the East and of the West between these two nations, and reposed, after their toilsome march, in this sumptuous city.

Palmyra, peopled by a colony of Greeks and of Arabs, united the manners of both. Its government was republican, and it maintained its independence during the time of the greatest power of Rome. The Parthians and the Romans were equally anxious to secure its alliance in all their wars. After his victories over the Parthians, Trajan united this republic to the Roman empire. Commerce, however, did not abandon Palmyra;

its wealth continued to increase, and its opulent citizens covered their paternal soil with those superb specimens of Greek architecture, which still astound the traveller who beholds them, rising in lonely grandeur out of the sands of the desert. Nothing remains of Palmyra but these ruins, and the brilliant and romantic story of Zenobia. This extraordinary woman was the daughter of an Arab scheik; she declared herself descended from Cleopatra, whom she, however, far surpassed in dignity and in virtue. Zenobia owed her power only to the services she rendered to her country. During the reign of Gallienus, when the empire was attacked on every side, when Valerian was prisoner to the king of Persia, and Asia was inundated with his armies, Zenobia imboldened her husband Odenatus, a rich senator of Palmyra, to resist the invasion of the Persians, of his own authority, and with no other aid than that of his fellow-citizens and the Arabs of the desert. She shared all her husband's toils and dangers, whether in the field, or in his favourite sport, lion-hunting. She defeated Sapor, pursued him twice up to the very gates of Ctesiphon, and reigned, at first, in conjunction with Odenatus, and, after his death, alone, over Syria and Egypt, which were hers by conquest. Trebellius Pollio, a contemporary writer, who saw her on that fatal occasion when she was led in triumph to Rome, (A. D. 273,) paints her thus: It is the ideal of a lofty Arab beauty:—

“Zenobia received those who came to pay her homage with Persian pomp, exacting the sort of adoration paid to eastern monarchs; but, at table, she followed the Roman customs. When she addressed the people, she appeared with a helmet on her head and her arms bare; but a mantle of purple, adorned with gems, partly covered her person. Her countenance was of an aquiline cast; her complexion was not brilliant, but her black eyes, of singular radiance, were animated with a celestial fire, and an inexpressible grace. Her teeth were of such dazzling whiteness, that it was commonly thought she had substituted pearls for those nature had given her. Her voice was clear and harmonious, yet manly. On occasion, she knew how to show a tyrant's severity; but she delighted rather in the clemency of good princes. Beneficent with wisdom and moderation, she husbanded her treasure in a manner little common among women. She was to be seen at the head of her armies in her car, on horseback, or foot, but rarely in a more luxurious carriage.”

Such was the woman who vanquished Sapor, and who gave her confidence to the sublime Longinus, the instructor of her children, and her prime minister.

Up to the year 226 of the Christian era, the Roman territory was bounded by Parthia on its eastern border: after that period, the Persian Sassanides were their neighbours on the same frontier. The Parthians, a Celtic tribe, sprung from Bactriana, had founded their empire 256 years before Christ. They had conquered Persia from the Caspian Sea up to the Persian Gulf. This vast territory, bounded by two seas, by lofty mountains, and sandy deserts, has almost always formed an independent state difficult to attack, and almost incapacitated from acquiring or maintaining distant possessions. For nearly five centuries of domination, the Parthians remained strangers amid the subject Persians. They had given to their monarchy a form somewhat resembling the feudal governments of Europe. Their kings, of the family of the Arsacides, had granted small tributary sovereignties to a great number of the princes of their house, and to other men of high birth. All this nobility, indeed the whole of the victor race, were mounted for the field. Several Greek colonies preserved their republican institutions and their independence in the midst of the monarchy; but the Persians were not trusted either with civil power, or with the use of arms, and were held in complete subjection.

These Persians were urged to revolt by Artaxerxes, or Ardshir, founder of the dynasty of the Sassanides; who, after his victories, declared himself descended from those kings of Persia who had bowed to the victorious arms of Alexander the Great. He was yet more powerfully seconded by religious enthusiasm, than by the feeling of national honour or independence. The ancient religion of Zoroaster was once more placed on the throne. The belief in the two principles, Ormusd and Ahriman, the revelation of the Zenda Vesta; the worship of fire or light, as the representative of the Good Principle; the horror of temples and images; the power of the magi, which extended to the most indifferent actions of every true believer; the spirit of persecution (cruelly displayed against the Christians when they began to spread over Persia,) were re-established by a national council, in which 80,000 magi assembled on the convocation of Artaxerxes.

The Persians affirmed that the sceptre of these kings extended

over 40,000,000 of subjects; but the population of the countries of the East has always been imperfectly known. The numbers usually given in history have been taken from the hyperbolical reports of their writers, and not from any statistical documents. The Persians can neither be classed with civilized nations, nor with barbarians; though the Greeks and Romans always gave them the latter appellation. They had acquired those arts which minister to luxury and effeminacy, but not those which refine or elevate the taste; they had laws emanating from despotic power, which preserve order, but which secure to a nation neither justice nor happiness; they had that literary culture which feeds the imagination, but does not enlighten the understanding; their religion, that of the two principles, and their aversion for idolatry satisfied the reason, but did not purify the heart. It was at this stage of civilization, which contains within itself an obstacle to all farther progress, that the people of the East founded great empires, while man never attained the highest excellence and dignity of which he is capable. Artaxerxes (A. D. 226—238,) and his son Sapor (A. D. 238—269,) achieved great victories over nations protected by the Romans, and even over the Romans themselves. But their monarchy experienced the fate of all despotic governments, until its total subversion by the Mussulmans in 651. Its history is composed of treachery and massacre in the royal family, the members of which hurled each other from the throne in rapid succession; of long periods devoted to vice, or to an effeminate indolence, broken only by flashes of ambition, leading to desolating wars.

The Parthians had conquered Armenia, which lay between their territory and that of the Romans, and had placed on the throne of Artaxata, the Armenian capital, a younger branch of their own kings, the Arsacides. Liberty has ever been unknown in Armenia. The lofty mountains which surround the country failed to inspire the inhabitants with the courage which is the ordinary characteristic of mountaineers. The Armenians were patient, industrious, but always subdued and dependent. At the time of the fall of the Parthian empire, they were conquered by Artaxerxes and by Sapor. Nevertheless, Tiridates, heir of their ancient line of kings, threw off the Persian yoke in the year 297, and, with the aid of the Romans, rendered Armenia independent. His reign (A. D. 297—342) is regarded by the Armenians as the period of their glory. It was at this time that they adopt-

ed the Christian religion, which cemented their alliance with the Romans; it was then that they invented the written character still in use among them; that they produced a literature which they still regard with admiration,—an admiration, however, confined to themselves;—lastly, that they began to translate the Bible, and some Greek works, which have been found among them in our own times. This prosperity was not of long continuance. At the death of Tiridates, their fate was that which must ever await a nation which risks its happiness, its existence, on the chances of succession of an absolute monarchy.

Such were the countries of Asia which bordered on the Roman territory. But to the north of Caucasus, of Thibet, and of the mountains of Armenia, a race of men existed, entirely different from those we have described; a race free and untamed; not bound to the soil they inhabited; a terror to all their neighbours, and destined to exercise a disastrous influence over the fate of Rome. This was the countless nomad people, comprehended under the name of Scythians, or Tartars. The Tartar race was spread over the whole extent of country (measuring from west to east) from the shores of the Black Sea, where it touches on the Slavonic tribes, to the sea of Japan and the Kurile Islands, or to the great wall of China; and, from north to south, from the neighbourhood of the frozen sea, to the lofty chain of Thibet, which separates the cold regions of northern from the burning climes of southern Asia, leaving no temperate district between. The centre of Asia seems to be composed of a vast table land, which rises to the level of our highest mountains, and which its temperature unfits for any very varied cultivation, though its boundless steppes are clothed by nature with a luxuriant vegetation. In these boundless plains, the Tartar tribes have, from the most remote antiquity, preserved the same manners and the same mode of life. They have invariably despised the labours of tillage; have subsisted solely on the produce of their herds and flocks; and have as invariably shown the utmost readiness to follow, not as an organized army, but as an armed nation, any chieftain who would lead them on to the plunder of more temperate regions, and of more civilized nations. The men live on horseback, or in their tents, holding nothing honourable but war; nothing venerable but the sword, which was formerly the emblem of their sanguinary divinity. The women follow the men in covered cars which contain their families and all their wealth,

and which are, during half the year, their only dwelling-place. Their contempt for the sedentary arts is unchangeable: they esteem it an honour or a duty to destroy, to extirpate, the civilization which they detest, and regard as hostile; and if a chief, endowed with the talents of Attila, Zengis, or Timur, were now to spring up among them, they would be as eager as ever to rear the horrible trophies which marked their conquests—the pyramids of heads for which Timur, the most humane of the three, ordered the massacre of 70,000 inhabitants of Ispahan, and 90,000 of Bagdad. Now, as then, they would, perhaps, propose to rase every edifice, every wall, that, to use their favourite expression, no obstacle might arrest the career of their lightning-footed steeds.

But though their character is unaltered, their numbers are no longer the same; the inhabitants of Siberia, and of all the borders of the frozen ocean, subdued by the rigour of the climate, and by their necessities, have established themselves in permanent dwellings, and submitted to the Russian yoke. The inhabitants of the valleys of Thibet, subjugated by a stern theocracy, have lost their energy in the convents of the grand lama. Independent Tartary, the country of the Kalmucs, the Usbecs, the Mongols, is very much narrowed: it occupies only a third of the space it occupied in the time of the Romans; still, however, its extent is prodigious, and its population may yet visit Asia with new revolutions.

The Tartars have continued free. It would be difficult to establish a despotism in the midst of boundless plains; unsupported by fortresses or prisons, by standing armies, by police, or courts of justice. The sovereignty resides in the Couroultai, or assembly of the nation, to which all the free men repair on horseback. Here they decide on peace and war, frame and promulge laws, and administer justice. Domestic slavery has, in all ages, formed a part of their system of manners: the absence of all cultivation of the land is a security for the slave's obedience; his only food is what he receives from the hand of his master; he has no means of existing without the milk and the flesh of the herds he tends; and if he attempted to flee into the boundless steppes where nature has provided no sustenance for man, he would soon perish from hunger. Besides, although the Tartar has the right of life and death over his slave, he usually treats him with considerable mildness, and regards him as a member of his family:

he even trusts him with arms for the defence of his camp and his flocks. Where civilization has not refined the manners, and separated the ranks of society by an impassable distance, similar occupations, common wants, and common toils, compel man to recognise man in his slave; while the boundless extent given to the paternal authority confounds the son with the slave, and thus tends yet farther to obliterate the distinction. The chief, or khan, of a Tartar family rejoices in the increase of his children and of his serfs, as much as in that of his flocks and herds. Thus, without emerging from a private station, he sometimes finds himself at the head of an army; he has yearly to remove his tents from summer to winter pastures, and thus, in the exercise of his domestic economy, to plan and conduct great military marches. His children and his slaves are ready to second him in all his quarrels, to revenge all insults to his honour, if he receive any aggression or affront from a neighbour or from a superior. These petty feuds have often been the first cause of the great revolutions of Asia. Often, we may observe a chief, encouraged by his victories over some personal enemy, turn his arms against the rich cities of Sogdiana or Bactriana; pillage Bocchara or Samarcand, and at length, march to the conquest of Persia, of India, China, or the West. Often, too, we see a vanquished warrior, nay, a fugitive slave, traverse the desert to escape from the vengeance of his adversary; fall in with some wandering horde; go on increasing the number of his troop; and, at length, appear as a conqueror on the frontiers of civilized countries.

Every incident of pastoral life is a preparation for war. The constant habit of braving the inclemency of the seasons, and the attacks of wild beasts; the science of the encampments, and the marches which form a part of daily life; habitual temperance, and yet great facility in obtaining food; for the flocks of the Tartars follow the armies, which are but bands of their shepherds. In fact, in the Scythian tribes, every man is a soldier, and the foe whom they attack or invade has not an army, but a nation to contend with. This explains the phenomenon, which appears at first sight inexplicable, of a desert pouring down, upon popular and civilized countries, torrents of armed men. This northern region, which has been called the Mother of Nations, does not teem with such a superabundance of life. A shepherd can hardly exist on the quantity of land which would feed twenty husbandmen; but when a million of inhabitants issue forth from a region

far superior to Europe in extent, there would be among them at least 200,000 men capable of bearing arms; and this number is frequently sufficient to overthrow an empire. The country they have abandoned remains a desert, and there is no proof that it has ever contained more inhabitants than it could support.

The stream of emigration from Grand Tartary has taken its course, alternately, to the east, the west, and the south. At the time of the overthrow of the Roman empire, the whole force of the Tartar tribes seemed directed towards the west. An empire formerly powerful, the first monarchy of the Huns, had been overthrown by the Sienpi, at a distance of 500 leagues from the Roman frontier, and near to that of China, in the first century of the Christian era. Driven from their own country, the Huns had invaded their neighbours, and had pushed them onwards towards the west. But their wars and their conquests would have been confined within the wide plains of Tartary, had not the thousands of Roman captives, and the immense treasure carried off by the northern tribes, during the disastrous reign of Gallienus, been diffused by commerce over the whole north of Asia. The dexterity and talents of the slaves, the splendour of the costly stuffs exposed to sale in the markets of Tartary, tempted this warlike race to go in quest of similar treasures in the countries where they were to be bought, not with gold, but with blood; and the recollection of former pillage was the great cause of the repetition of such incursions.

The Tartar race is remarkable in the eyes of all others for its ugliness. A large head, a dun yellow complexion, small and sunken eyes, a flat nose, a thin and feeble beard, broad shoulders, and a short, square body, are the physical characteristics of the nation. The Tartars seem conscious of their own deformity: in all their treaties with conquered nations, they invariably exacted an annual tribute of young girls; and this intermixture of races has gradually corrected the hideousness of form among those established in milder climates.

The first of this race known to the Romans were the Alani. In the fourth century they pitched their tents in the country between the Volga and the Tanaïs, at an equal distance from the Black Sea and the Caspian. It does not appear that they struck the Europeans by their ugliness. But when the Taifalæ, the Huns, the Hungarians, the Turks, successively showed themselves upon their frontiers, the Greek writers expressed a feeling

of horror at their aspect, which their southern neighbours, the negroes and Abyssinians, had never excited among them.

We now come to the barbarous tribes of Europe;—those with whom we are more immediately connected, and whose history it imports us the most to know. Three great races of men, differing in language, habits, and religion, appear to have originally shared between them this western and northern portion of the ancient world—the Celts or Kelts, the Slavonians, and the Germans. Historians have often confounded them, from that strange national vanity which led them to attribute to their progenitors the conquests and ravages of the neighbouring race: as if their own did not furnish them with enough of crimes and of cruelties. Of these three races, two, the Celtic and the Slavonic, were almost completely subjugated in the third century; the third, on the contrary, was destined to triumph over Rome. The Celtic race had in part peopled Italy and Spain, where it had been blended with the Iberian, which was probably of African extraction. It had also spread over Gaul and Great Britain. It had emerged from the first stage of barbarism; had built towns, had practised agriculture and some of the arts of life, had amassed riches, and established gradations of rank in cities, which indicate a structure of society, if not very scientific, at least very ancient. But the progress of the Celts in the career of improvement had been stopped by their submission to the oppressive yoke of a strongly organized body of priests. The Druids, jealous of every authority that did not emanate from themselves, established a reign of terror over a people whom it was their policy to render ferocious. Their deities required continual streams of human blood to be shed upon their altars. Their worship, performed in the depth of forests impervious to the sun, or in subterranean caverns, was marked by the most horrible rites. The country of the Carnuti, now called Chartres, was the centre of their power and the sanctuary of their religion. The mistletoe was regarded as the type of the Divinity, and was gathered by them yearly with solemn ceremonies. But the Celtic race had seldom been able to withstand the Roman arms. Augustus had forbidden the Druids to sacrifice human victims. Claudius had broken up their associations, abolished their institutions, and destroyed their sacred woods. All the men of the higher classes in Gaul, Spain, and Britain, had received a Roman education. They had renounced the language and the faith of their fathers; the agricul-

tural population, whose condition was little better than that of slaves, had either perished from want, or had learned the language of their oppressors; and the Celtic race, once spread over a third part of Europe, had nearly disappeared. Their manners and their language were to be found only in a part of Armorica, or Little Britain, in the western parts of Great Britain and Ireland, where the Roman domination was comparatively recent, and the numbers small; and, lastly, in the mountains of Caledonia, inhabited by the Scots, the only people of Celtic or Gaëlic blood, who have retained their independence from the earliest times to the present day.

The fate of the Slavonic tribes had not been much more prosperous: they originally occupied the whole Illyrian peninsula, with the exception of Greece: its language is, in consequence, still called Illyrican. They had extended from the banks of the Danube and the Black Sea to the frozen ocean. Possessors of the most extensive plains of Europe,—plains which had been fertilized by deposits of the mud of mighty rivers,—the slaves were tillers of the ground from the remotest period. But the soil which fed, served to enchain them. They were not strong enough to defend its fruits, earned by the sweat of their brow, and they did not choose to lose them. They were invaded by all their neighbours; to the south by the Romans, to the east by the Tartars, to the west by the Germans; and their very name, which, in their own tongue, signifies *glorious*, is become, in all modern languages, the badge of servitude; a remarkable monument of the oppression of a great people, and of the abuse of victory on the part of all its neighbours.

All the Slavonic nations, to the south of the Danube, had been subjugated by the Romans. It is possible, however, that, in the lofty mountains of Bosnia, Croatia, and Morlachia, a portion of this race which had never been civilized, might have preserved a wild kind of independence. Indeed, after the fall of the empire, we find traces of such a people; and it has retained to this day the language, the passion for war, the habits of violence and plunder, proper to the Slavonic tribes. To the north of the Black Sea, the Russians, one of the most powerful nations of this race, had not defended their fruitful plains against the invasion of the Alans, who were soon followed by the Huns, and other Tartar tribes. The Slavonians who occupied Russia and a part of Poland, were subject to the incursions of various tribes of the Gothic or Germanic family, which had issued forth from

Scandinavia. In the fourth century, the Romans knew no other independent Slavonic people than the Quadi, the Sarmati, and Gepidæ, who, with difficulty, preserved some remnant of their ancient territory in Bohemia and Poland. At that period, the Sarmatian horseman was esteemed more formidable for the extreme rapidity of his movements, than for his valour. He had usually two or three led horses, and changed as often as the one he rode was fatigued. In the absence of iron, he pointed his spears with bone hardened, and often poisoned. His cuirass was composed of laminæ of horn placed closely over each other, like the scales of fish. Like the Cossack of the present day, he preceded the most formidable armies, and shared in their successes, and in their plunder; but he exhibited little bravery in attack, little firmness in defence, and inspired little terror.

Lastly, the whole north of Europe was occupied by that great Germanic race from which the nations of modern Europe more immediately derive their origin. The Tartars had issued forth to destroy—the Germans advanced to conquer and to reconstruct: their very names are connected with our present existence. Saxons, Franks, Almain*, Burgundians, Lombards, either already occupied, or were on the point of occupying, the countries in which we find them still; they spoke a language which many among them still speak; they brought with them opinions, prejudices, customs, of which there are abundant traces around us. Throughout the vast extent of Germania, in which Scandinavia must be included, the sentiment of haughty independence was predominant over every other, and had determined the national constitution and manners. The Germans were barbarians, but it was in some degree because they resolved to be so: they had set those first steps in the career of civilization which are generally the most difficult; and there they stopped short, from the fear of compromising their liberty. The example of the Romans, with whom continual conflicts had brought them acquainted, had persuaded them that it was impossible to unite elegance and the pleasures of life, with the haughty and resolute independence they prized above all other possessions. They were not ignorant of the useful arts; they knew how to work in metal, and were expert and ingenious in the fabrication of their weapons; but they looked on every sedentary occupation with contempt.

* I have used this nearly obsolete translation of *Allemands*—which name of a tribe the French use to represent the whole race.—(*Trans.*)

They did not choose to shut themselves up within the walls of cities, which appeared to them the prisons of despotism. The Burgundians, who were then established on the shores of the Baltic, lost the respect of their countrymen, because they had consented to inhabit *burgs* (whence they derive their name,) and to exercise mechanical employments. The Germans practised agriculture; but, lest the labourer should become too strongly attached to the soil; lest by seizing his property, it might be possible to secure his person; lest wealth should become the object of his desires, instead of military glory; not only did they resolve that the land should be distributed among all the citizens in equal portions, they also decreed that the portion each cultivated should be annually determined by lot, so as to render impossible any local attachment. The effect of this was, of course, to render equally impossible any permanent improvement. The Teutonic tribes appear to have possessed a kind of written character, the Runic, but it seems that they used it only for inscriptions on wood or stone. The length of time required for works of this kind would, of course, render the use of it extremely rare; the inanimate object which, by the aid of these inscriptions, seemed to speak a language known only to the sage, appeared to the people endowed with a supernatural power; and the knowledge of the Runes was looked upon as a branch of magic.

The government of the Germans, so long as they inhabited their own country, was the freest of which we have any record. They had kings: the Romans, at least, translated the title *könig* by their own word *rex*, though the functions were widely different. They were frequently hereditary, or were, at least, always chosen out of one family, the only one which had a common name. These kings, distinguished from their subjects by their long flowing hair, were, however, in fact, only presidents of the councils of war or of justice, in which every citizen had a voice. They commanded all warlike expeditions; they presided over the distribution of the spoil; they proposed to the people the measures for their consideration; they kept up intercourse with neighbouring nations; but, if any weakness or vice rendered them unworthy to lead freemen, the war-axe soon executed justice upon them: for it seems to have been the opinion among them, that pre-eminent honour must be bought by exposure to pre-eminent danger; and that the life of a king ought not to be hedged in with so many securities as that of a subject. In fact, almost every page of German history is stained by the murder of

a king. But private citizens were not exposed to the same risks. Not only had the king no right to put them to death, but even the sovereign power of the *Mallum*, or assembly of the people, did not extend to that. The man from whom society withdrew its protection, was still at liberty to quit the country. Exile was the severest punishment the sovereign power could inflict.

The Germans were obedient to no authority but that of their women and their priests. In the former, they acknowledged somewhat of a divine nature: they thought beauty must have a kind of inspiration, and they received the voice of their prophetesses as the voice of Heaven. The priests owed their influence as much to their own policy as to the superstitious temper of the people. The northern divinities were warlike, and their example and their worship were more calculated to form the minds of their votaries to valour and independence than to fear. The unknown world, peopled with spirits who rose from the grave, who sat upon the clouds, whose wailings were heard floating in the night winds, and mingled with the voice of the storm, had been created or clothed with all their terrors by the German imagination. Nevertheless, this was not, strictly speaking, religion. These superhuman powers were not those of the Deity; their possessors were malevolent beings, whose perfidy was as much to be dreaded as their force; they were foes against whom it was necessary to contend; and the priests of Odin seemed hardly to have any succour to offer against that pale shadow, the dread king of the spirits of the forest, or the terrible *Valkyries*, who spun the thread of human destiny.

The German priests were not united into a compact body; they had not that rigorous organization and discipline which rendered the Druids so terrible, and gave such stability to their power. Nor did the German people seem to hold to their religion with very ardent zeal; they were easily converted to Christianity, whenever their kings set them the example; and it is remarkable that, in the history of their conversions, we find no tradition of the opposition which it would have been natural to expect from their priests. But the chiefs themselves appear to have turned the sacerdotal power to political account. They placed the police of the public meetings under the immediate protection of the gods; and the priest alone, under the authority of the king, ventured to inflict the punishment of death on any man who disturbed the deliberations of the national assembly or *Mallum*. This was only to be effected by treating the offence as

sacrilege, for no insult to the civil power would have subjected him to the sword of the law.

The Germans who attacked the empire appeared under various names; and these names, sometimes abandoned, and sometimes resumed after a considerable lapse of time, throw a great confusion over the geography of ancient Germany, and the classification of nations who frequently shifted their place of abode. We shall only endeavour to recall to the minds of our readers a small number of the most remarkable. On the lower Rhine were the Franks; on the upper, the Allemans; near the mouths of the Elbe, the Saxons: these three nations, who held possession of the land of their fathers, were all formed of confederations of small states, or tribes more ancient still, which had united for their common defence, and had dropped their original name about the middle of the third century, and taken generic names, such as Franken, or freemen, Allemannen; or all men: Sachsen, or Sassen, cultivators,* or, to take a cognate word in our own tongue, settlers. There were also Schwaben,† or wandering men. In each of these federative nations there were as many kings as small states; and, almost, as villages: but, for their most important expedition, or most dangerous wars, they all united round one common leader.

On the shores of the Baltic, in Prussia and Central Germany, were found the Vandals, the Heruli, the Lombards, and the Burgundians, who were regarded as originally sprung from the same stem, and differing from the more western Germans in their dialect and in the form of their government: this was more purely military, and seemed to have been consolidated during migrations of which they retained only vague and uncertain traditions.

Lastly, in Poland, and, more recently, in Transylvania, we find the great race of the Goths, who, issuing in three divisions from Scandinavia, first planted themselves near the mouths of the Vistula, and afterwards advanced southward as far as the banks of the Danube. The Wisigoths or West Goths, the Ostrogoths, or East Goths, and Gepidæ (draggers,) formed these three divisions, who were distinguished among the Germanic tribes by superior cultivation of mind, gentler manners, and a greater disposition to advance in the career of civilization. We shall soon, however, see what was this gentleness, and what was the condition of civilized nations when they were reduced to place their last hope in Ostrogoths and Wisigoths.

* *Saas*, an inhabitant. † *Schweben* to float. (Modern German.) Translator.

CHAPTER IV.

Division of the fourth Century into three Periods: 1. Reign of Constantine. 2. Reigns of his Sons and Nephews. 3. Reigns of Valentinian and his Successors, down to Theodosius.—Character of Constantine.—His Waverings between Paganism and Christianity.—His Cruelties.—Six Emperors at once.—Final Union of the Empire under Constantine.—Extermination of all his Rivals.—Foundation of Constantinople.—Murder of all his Kindred by Constantine.—His Zeal for the Church.—His Death.—Division of the Empire among his three Sons.—Their Wars.—Constantius, the Survivor, exclusively occupied with religious Controversies.—Donatist and Circoncillion Sects, their Quarrels and Atrocities.—Religious Suicides.—Arian Controversy.—The Church equally divided.—Council of Nice.—Favours showed by Constantius to Arianism.—Opposition of St. Athanasius.—Conquests of Sapor II. in the East, and of the Franks and Allemans in the West.—Constantius confides to his Nephew Julian the Defence of the West.—Character of Julian.—His Attachment to the ancient Religion.—His Victories and Death.

AFTER endeavouring to give some general notion of the internal state of the Roman empire in its decline, of the revolution it had passed through, of the barbarians who hung over its frontiers, and menaced its existence, we come at length to the epoch which we have marked at the starting-point, whence to proceed in our examination of this portion of the middle or dark ages. This is the coronation of the emperor Constantine by the legions of Britain, at York, on the 25th of July, A. D. 306.

The limits assigned to works belonging to this series, do not, however, permit us to lay before our readers a complete detailed narrative of the fall of the Roman empire, and the establishment of the barbaric monarchies. This is to be found in several celebrated writers, to whose voluminous works we might refer our readers, or, still better, to the study and comparison of the ancient authorities. History can be effectually studied only in the seclusion of the closet; in the patient examination of original writers, and the accurate collation of evidence. All that we can affect to accomplish in the narrow space assigned to us is, to bring together the most striking pictures, to try to arrange them distinctly in the mind, and to show the general tendency of events. The most brilliant periods, the reigns which can be most easily studied in works devoted expressly to them, are precisely those

which we shall think ourselves justified in passing over the most rapidly. But all have not leisure for such a course of study; and, perhaps, even for those who have passed through it, a brief recapitulation of the general facts will be useful, and may repair the losses, or correct the inaccuracies, of memory.

The fourth century may be naturally divided into three periods, of nearly equal length. The reign of Constantine, from the year 306 to 337; that of his sons and his nephews, from 337 to 363; and the reigns of Valentinian, of his sons, and of Theodosius, from 364 to 395. During the first, the ancient empire of Rome, the empire of Augustus, gave place to a new monarchy, whose throne stood on the confines of Europe and of Asia, with other manners, another character, and another religion. During the second, this religion, passing from a state of persecution to one of sovereignty, experienced the fatal effects almost invariably attached to a prosperity too rapid, a power too recent. The violence of religious dissensions, during this period, silenced all secular controversies, all political passions. During the third period, the empire, shaken anew by the general attack of the barbarians, narrowly escaped complete subversion. The following chapter is intended to give a sketch of the first two periods only.

We have seen that Diocletian, after appointing four heads to the military despotism which ruled the empire, induced his colleague, Maximian, to abdicate the throne at the same time with himself, on the 1st of May, A. D. 305. The two Cæsars, Constantius Chlorus in Gaul, and Galerius in Illyricum, were then elevated to the rank of Augusti; while two new Cæsars, Severus and Maximin, were appointed to second them. But from the moment that Diocletian ceased to moderate the hatred and the jealousy of the subalterns whom he thought fit to honour with the name of colleagues, the government which he had given to the empire was a scene of constant confusion and civil war, till the period at which all the colleagues fell in succession, and gave place, in the year 323, to the solitary rule of Constantine.

Constantine had not been called to the succession. Diocletian, partial to Galerius, his son-in-law, had left the nomination of the two new Cæsars to him. Constantius Chlorus, who had led a division of the Gallic legions into Britain to oppose the incursions of the Caledonians, was then ill; and Galerius, sure of the support of his two creatures, waited impatiently for the death of his

rival, to unite the whole Roman empire under his own sway. But the moderation and justice of Constantius had rendered him the more dear to the soldiers and the provincials under his command, from their contrast with the ferocity of his colleagues. At the moment of his death, the legions stationed at York, as a tribute of gratitude and affection to his memory, saluted his son Constantine with the title of Cæsar, and decorated him with the purple. Whatever resentment Galerius felt at this, he soon perceived the danger of engaging in a civil war. As the eldest of the emperors, and the representative of Diocletian, he recognised the authority of the colleague imposed upon him by the legions. He left him the administration of Gaul and Britain, but assigned to him only the fourth rank among the rulers of the empire, and the title of Cæsar. Under this title Constantine administered the prefecture of Gaul for six years, (A. D. 306—312,) perhaps the most glorious and the most virtuous period of his life.

Nature had endowed Constantine, then thirty years old, with qualities that command respect. His person was dignified, his countenance noble and gracious, his strength remarkable even among legionaries, and his courage brilliant even in the estimation of the bravest. Although his mind had not been formed by a liberal education, it was quick and facile; his conversation was lively, only he was too much addicted to raillery for a man whom it is impossible to rally in return. The grandeur of his conceptions, the firmness of his character, and his consummate talents for war, gave him a high rank among generals and statesmen. Happy would it have been for him, if fortune, which with a rare constancy, favoured all his enterprises, had not, by her indulgence, fostered and revealed his vices; if the height to which he attained had not made him giddy; if the drunkenness of absolute power had not altered his character; and if every advance towards the acquisition of a new power had not been outweighed by the loss of virtue.

From the time of his elevation to the throne, Constantine wavered between paganism and Christianity; and throughout his prefecture he granted perfect toleration to all religious opinions. In this he only followed the example of his father, who had sheltered the provinces under his rule from the persecutions of Diocletian. Gaul was, indeed, the part of the empire in which we find the fewest martyrs. The Christian religion had made very little progress there; but the tolerance of Constantine, contrast-

ed with the ferocity of the persecutions of Galerius and the two Cæsars, attracted a great number of refugees to the countries under his sway, and thus caused a rapid spread of the new religion in the West.

After pacifying Britain, Constantine had led back his army into Gaul. He had lessened the weight of taxation; and we learn that the town of Autun expressed its gratitude to him, for lightening the pressure of the capitation, or poll-tax. The moment the Franks encamped on the banks of the Rhine, and learned the death of his father, they crossed the river, and laid waste a part of Gaul. Constantine marched against them at the head of the British legions; defeated them; made a great number of prisoners; and, at the celebration of the games in his capital of Trèves, he caused these captives to be thrown to wild beasts. They were devoured before the eyes of a people by whom this spectacle was hailed with rapturous applause. Among the victims, the most remarkable were two Frankish kings, Ascaric and Regais. This is the earliest tradition we have of the first race of sovereigns of France.

It did not enter the mind of Constantine, nor of those by whom he was surrounded, that any humanity could be due to the vanquished, any compassion to barbaric kings. In a panegyric addressed to him, and recited in his presence, this act is especially celebrated; and the torture inflicted on these two Frankish kings is extolled above the most glorious of his victories. But Constantine was hereafter, and repeatedly, to shed blood far more sacred in his eyes; his ambition was untempered by pity, and his jealousy of power stifled the most powerful feelings of nature in his breast.

During this time the senate and the people of Rome, abandoned by all the emperors, who had fixed their residence in the provinces, irritated by the announcement of fresh taxes, conferred the rank of Augustus on Maxentius, son of Maximian, (A. D. 306,) who, like Constantine, had not been raised by Galerius to the rank of Cæsar, to which he seemed to have claims. At this intelligence the aged Maximian, who had been reluctantly drawn into an abdication to which his constant restlessness continually gave the lie, hastened to resume the purple, in order to protect his son and to assist him with his counsels. He gave his daughter Fausta in marriage to Constantine, and conferred on him the title of Augustus; and he claimed from the whole West,

governed by his son and his son-in-law, that deference which those two princes owed to the eldest head of the empire, and the author of their own greatness. But love of power can ill be reconciled in royal minds with the plebeian virtues of filial affection and gratitude. The veteran, illustrious from his numerous victories, was driven out of Italy by his son Maxentius; repulsed from Illyricum by his ancient colleague, Galerius; and permitted to take refuge in Gaul by Constantine, only on condition that he would a second time renounce the supreme power he had resumed. He lived for some time in the Narbonnese province; but on the report of the death of Constantine, (probably spread by Maximian himself,) he once more resumed the purple. Constantine put himself at the head of his legions, and instantly marched to Marseilles, where he besieged Maximian, caused him to be delivered into his hands by the soldiers of the town, and to be strangled, (Feb. A. D. 310.)

For two whole years the empire had had six emperors at a time, all recognised as legitimate. But the death of Maximian was followed by that of Galerius, in May, 311, after a dreadful illness. Four Augusti, of equal rank, now once more shared the four prefectures. Scarcely, however, had they proclaimed to the empire their union, when they began to plan each other's dethronement. Maxentius had exercised an odious tyranny over Italy and Africa; he had plundered, persecuted, and dishonoured the senate, which had placed him on the throne; and, while he gave himself up without reserve to shameful pleasures, he lavished the money he extorted from the citizens, by infamous confiscations, on the soldiers, on whom he placed his sole reliance. Maximin, who reigned over the East, was neither less cruel, nor less hateful to the people. Constantine offered his alliance, and the hand of his sister, to Licinius, the third of the Augusti, who governed Illyricum, and abandoned to him the conquest of the East, reserving to himself that of Italy and Africa. He passed the Alps at the head of the Gallic legions; gained three great victories, at Turin, at Verona, and before the gates of Rome, over those of Maxentius, which that dastardly and effeminate ruler did not venture to command in person. After the third, which took place on the 3d of October, 312, the head of Maxentius, for whom Constantine had little reason to feel as a brother-in-law, was exhibited to the people, severed from the trunk. Constantine was received in Rome with acclamations; Africa acknowledged him, as well as

Italy; and an edict of religious toleration, issued at Milan, extended the advantages, hitherto enjoyed by Gaul alone, to this prefecture. Licinius was not less successful against Maximin, and the use he made of his victory, perhaps, spared Constantine the commission of some crimes. Licinius put to death all the sons of Maximin, all the sons of Galerius, and all the sons of Severus, that none might remain to carry into a private station the memory of their father's power. Even the wife and daughter of Diocletian, who were known to him only by the benefits he had received at their hands, and by the respect of the people, fell victims to his ruthless ambition. He would suffer no rival claims to the throne, and he left nothing for Constantine to do in the work of extermination. The two allies and brothers-in-law, thus left masters of the field, immediately prepared for combat. In the first civil war, A. D. 315, Constantine wrested Illyricum from Licinius. After an interval of eight years, war was renewed. Licinius was beaten before Adrianople, on the 3d of July, 323, and the whole empire recognised Constantine the Great as its monarch.

Constantine was a native of the western provinces. He spoke their language; there he first distinguished himself by his victories, and by a beneficent administration; there his name, and that of his father, were endeared to the people and to the soldiers. Nevertheless, one of the first uses he made of his victory was, to abandon these provinces for Greece, whither he went to build a new Rome, to which he laboured to transfer all the luxury and the privileges of the ancient city. The latter had long been regarded with jealousy by the emperors. They dreaded a residence in a town in which the people still remembered that the sovereign power had resided in them; in which every senator felt himself of higher nobility than the monarch; more familiar with those elegancies and refinements of manners which are the indelible mark of aristocratic birth, and the object of humiliating desire to those who can never acquire them. Constantine wished to have a capital more modern than the imperial dignity, a senate more recent than despotism. He wished for the pomp of Rome, without her recollections, without her means of resistance. He chose Byzantium, on the Bosphorus of Thrace; and the new capital, which took its name from him, standing on the confines of Europe and of Asia, with a magnificent port open to the commerce of the Black Sea and of the Mediterranean, has shown,

by its long prosperity, by the invincible resistance it offered to its barbarian aggressors for a thousand years, how admirably sagacious was the choice of its founder.

But it was while occupied in watching the infant growth of Constantinople, (A. D. 329,) during the fourteen years of peace which closed his reign, that the hero descended to the common level of kings. As he approached the East, he adopted oriental manners; he affected the gorgeous purple of the monarchs of Persia; he decorated his head with false hair of different colours, and with a diadem covered with pearls and gems. He substituted flowing silken robes, embroidered with flowers, for the austere garb of Rome, or the unadorned purple of the first Roman emperors. He filled his palace with eunuchs, and lent an ear to their perfidious calumnies; he became the instrument of their base intrigues, their cupidity, and their jealousy. He multiplied spies, and subjected the palace and the empire, alike, to a suspicious police. He lavished the wealth of Rome on the sterile pomp of stately buildings. He reduced the legions from 6000 men to 1000 or 1500, through jealousy of those to whom he must have given the command of these formidable bodies. Lastly, he poured out the best and noblest blood in torrents, more especially of those nearly connected with himself.

The most illustrious victim of his tyranny was Crispus, his son by his first wife, whom he had made the partner of his empire, and the commander of his armies. Crispus was at the head of the administration of Gaul, where he gained the hearts of the people by his virtue. In the war against Licinius, he had displayed singular talents, and had secured victory to the arms of Constantine. From that moment, a shameful and unnatural jealousy stifled every paternal feeling in the bosom of the monarch. The acclamations of the people sounded in his ears like the triumphs of a rival, and not the successes of a son. He detained Crispus within the palace, he surrounded him with spies and informers. At length, in the month of July, 326, he ordered him to be arrested in the midst of a grand festival, to be carried off to Pola in Istria, and there to be put to death. A cousin of Crispus, the son of Licinius and of Constantine's favourite sister, was, at the same time, sent, without trial, without even accusation, to the block. His mother implored his life in vain, and died of grief. Fausta, the daughter of Maximian, the wife of Constantine, and the mother of the three princes who succeeded

him, was shortly after stifled in the bath by order of her husband.

In a palace which he had made a desert, the murderer of his father-in-law, his brothers-in-law, his sister, his wife, his son, and his nephew, must have felt the stings of remorse, if hypocritical priests and courtier bishops had not lulled his conscience to rest. We still possess the panegyric in which they represent him as a favourite of Heaven, a saint worthy of our highest veneration; we have also several laws by which Constantine atoned for all his crimes, in the eyes of the priests, by heaping boundless favours on the church. The gifts he bestowed on it, the immunities he granted to persons and to property connected with it, soon directed ambition entirely to ecclesiastical dignities. The men who had so lately been candidates for the honours of martyrdom, now found themselves depositaries of the greatest wealth and the highest power. How was it possible that their characters should not undergo a total change? Nevertheless, Constantine himself was hardly a Christian. Up to the age of forty, (A. D. 314,) he had continued to make public profession of paganism, although he had long favoured the Christians. His devotion was divided between Apollo and Jesus; and he adorned the temples of the ancient gods and the altars of the new faith with equal offerings. Cardinal Baronius severely censures the edict by which (A. D. 321) he commanded that the haruspices should be consulted. But, as he advanced in age, Constantine's confidence in the Christians increased: he gave up to them the undivided direction of his conscience and the education of his children. When he felt the attacks of the disease which terminated his life at the age of sixty-three, he was formally received into the bosom of the Church as a catechumen, and a few days afterwards was baptized, immediately before his death. He expired at Nicomedia, May 22, 337, after a reign of thirty-one years from the death of his father, and of fourteen from the conquest of the East.

During the whole course of his reign, Constantine had struggled to reunite the divided members of the empire. His own experience had taught him what jealousy absolute power excited among colleagues; what a feeble security is given to treaties between princes by the ties of blood: yet, at his death, he once more divided the empire. Indeed, for several years, he had sent his three sons and two nephews to serve their apprenticeship in

the art of ruling, at the expense of the provinces they were hereafter to govern as independent chiefs. Constantine, the eldest of the young princes, twenty-one years of age, reigned in the province of Gaul. Constantius, a year younger, remained with his father, and was the destined ruler of the East. Constans, a youth of seventeen, was sent into Italy, which, together with Africa, was to be subject to him. Dalmatius and Hannibalianus, the emperor's two nephews, were to inherit Thrace and Pontus as their share. Scarcely had he breathed his last, when his two elder sons set about to destroy his work. Constantius artfully enticed his two cousins to his court, and excited the jealousy of the army against them. The bishop of Nicomedia produced a forged will of the emperor, in which he expressed a suspicion that he had been poisoned by his brothers, and recommended his son to avenge him. Under pretext of obeying this injunction, in less than four months after his father's death, Constantius put to death two of his uncles, seven of his cousins, among whom were his two colleagues, and a great number of other distinguished persons, allied in some way or other to the imperial family. Two children alone, Gallus and Julian, nephews of Constantine the Great, were snatched by a pious hand from this butchery.

Constantius had thus usurped the inheritance of his two cousins. Constantine II. determined on seizing that of his youngest brother. In the third year of his reign, he made a descent upon Italy, in order to dethrone Constans; but, having been surprised by an ambuscade, he was put to death, by order of his brother, on the 9th of April, 340. Constans was, consequently, acknowledged emperor of Gaul as well as of Italy. After a reign of ten years, he was assassinated in the Pyrenees, February 27, 350, by Magnentius, the captain of his guards, who succeeded him. It was not till three years afterwards that Constantius succeeded in recovering the West, the empire of his two brothers, from Magnentius.

This chronology of murders is nearly all that remains of the civil history of these three princes. Neither patriots, nor men whose object was personal aggrandizement, could find any satisfaction in devoting themselves to political affairs. During the whole of this period, therefore, they were forgotten, and the minds of men were completely engrossed by the religious disputes which presented new fuel to the passions. It was by sectarian violence alone that man could gain affection from the peo-

ple or consideration from the court. It was by theological subtleties alone, that he could hope to move the popular passions. Those who could not be induced, nor constrained, to take up arms to defend property, life, or honour against the barbarians, eagerly seized them to force their fellow-citizens to think with themselves. All the temples of paganism were still standing, more than half the subjects of the empire still professed the ancient faith; and yet already does the history of the people over whom the sons of Constantine reigned, consist of little else than the contentions between sects of Christians.

Two great theological dissensions had broken out at the very moment at which Constantine put a stop to persecution, and while Licinius was still endeavouring to crush the church in the East. Both had a long and fatal influence on the destinies of the empire; yet the first, that of the Donatists of Africa, seems so futile, that it is impossible to explain the importance attached to it by the people, except from the novelty of religious disputes, and the universal disposition towards religious fanaticism which had been excited by passionate declamation. The Donatist controversy was not one of doctrine, but of ecclesiastical discipline; the contested election for the archbishopric of Carthage. Two competitors, Cecilius and Donatus, had been concurrently elected while the church was yet in a depressed state, and Africa subject to the tyrant Maxentius. Scarcely had Constantine subdued that province, when the two rivals referred their dispute to him. Constantine, who still publicly professed paganism, but had shown himself very favourable to the Christians, instituted a careful examination of their respective claims which lasted from the year 312 to 315, and finally decided in favour of Cecilius. Four hundred African bishops protested against this decision; from that time they were designated by the name of Donatists. Their number shows the progress the new faith had already made in Mauritania and Numidia. We must observe, however, that it appears nearly certain that, in Africa, every parish was under the spiritual government, not of a curate, but of a bishop.

In compliance with an order of the emperor, solicited by Cecilius, the property of the Donatists was seized and transferred to the antagonist body of the clergy. They revenged themselves by pronouncing sentence of excommunication against all the rest of the Christian world, and declaring, that whoever did not believe the election of Donatus to be canonical, would be everlast-

ingly damned. They even compelled all whom they converted from the hostile sect to be rebaptized, as if they were not Christians. Persecution on the one side, and fanaticism on the other, were perpetuated through three centuries, up to the period of the extinction of Christianity in Africa. The wandering preachers of the Donatist faction had no other means of living than the alms of their flocks; their influence and consideration, therefore, depended solely on their power of heating the imaginations and working on the fears of the feeble-minded, and thus gradually diffusing over the whole congregation that moral contagion which they began by exciting in women and children. As might be expected, they outdid each other in extravagance, and soon gave into the most frantic ravings: thousands of peasants, drunk with the effect of these exhortations, forsook their ploughs and fled to the deserts of Getulia. Their bishops, assuming the title of captains of the saints, put themselves at their head, and they rushed onwards, carrying death and desolation into the adjacent provinces; they were distinguished by the name of Circumcelliones: Africa was devastated by their ravages. They, in their turn, were delivered over to the most cruel torments whenever they fell into the hands of the imperial officers or the orthodox party, in the hope that the severity of these examples would intimidate their followers. Such measures, however, were perfectly unsuccessful, since the palm of martyrdom was the object of their most ardent desires. Persuaded that the most acceptable offering they could make to the Deity was their own lives, they frequently stopped the affrighted traveller, and, holding a dagger to his breast, demanded of him to put them to death. Often with arms in their hands they forced their way into the courts of justice, and compelled the judges to send them to torture and to death. Often they put an end to their own existence. Those who thought themselves sufficiently prepared for martyrdom, assembled their numerous congregations at the foot of some rock or lofty tower; and there, in the midst of prayers and the chanting of litanies, they threw themselves, one after another, from the height, and expired on the ground below.

The other theological contest arose out of causes more elevated and weighty, but, at the same time, more inscrutable, and impossible to determine. It has divided the church from the second century of its existence; it will, perhaps, divide it to the end of time. This is, the controversy on the mystery of the

Trinity. The word Trinity is found neither in the Holy Scriptures nor in the writings of the first Christians; but it had been employed from the beginning of the second century, when a more metaphysical turn had been given to the minds of men, and theologians had begun to attempt to explain the divine nature. Alexandria was one of the first cities in which the Christian religion had made proselytes among the higher classes of society. Those who had received their education in the Platonic schools which flourished in that great city, sought in the Scriptures a new light on the questions which had recently been agitated among them. The dogma of a mysterious trinity, which constituted the Divine essence, had been taught by the pagan Platonists of Alexandria. It seems to have sprung from the astonishment which the mathematical properties of numbers had excited in the minds of students of the abstract sciences. They thought they discovered something divine in these properties; and the power which numbers exercised over calculations appeared to them to extend over regions far removed from their actual influence. This illusion has been revived in every age of imperfect science. The new Platonic converts employed the terms of their peculiar system of philosophy, in the exposition of the dogmas of the Christian faith.

But whatever were the origin of these speculations, the question had no sooner descended from the lofty regions of metaphysical abstraction, to be applied to an explanation of the nature of Jesus Christ, than it acquired an importance which no Christian can contest. The Founder of the new religion, the Being who had brought upon earth a divine light, was he God, was he man, was he of an intermediate nature, and, though superior to all other created beings, yet himself created? This latter opinion was held by Arius, an Alexandrian priest, who maintained it in a series of learned controversial works between the years 318 and 325. As soon as the discussion had quitted the walls of the schools, and been taken up by the people, mutual accusations of the gravest kind took the place of metaphysical subtleties. The orthodox party reproached the Arians with blaspheming the Deity himself, by refusing to acknowledge him in the person of Christ. The Arians accused the orthodox of violating the fundamental law of religion, by rendering to the creature the worship due only to the Creator. Both maintained, with a show of reason, that their adversaries overturned the very foundations of

Christianity,—the one party by denying the divinity of the Redeemer, the other the unity of the Governor of the universe. The two opinions appeared so nicely balanced, that they were alternately triumphant, and it was difficult to decide which numbered the largest body of followers; but the ardent enthusiastic spirits, the populace in all the great cities, (and especially at Alexandria,) the women, and the newly-founded order of the monks of the desert, who had subjugated the force of their reason by a life of continual solitude and contemplation, were almost without exception, partisans of the faith which has since been declared orthodox. The contrary opinion appeared to them an insult to the object of their most passionate devotion. That opinion,—the Arian heresy, as it was called,—was embraced by all the new Christians of the Germanic tribes; by the people of Constantinople, and by a large portion of Asia; by the great majority of the dignitaries of the church, and by the depositaries of the civil authority.

Constantine thought this question of dogma might be decided by an assembly of the whole church. In the year 325, he convoked the council of Nice, at which 300 bishops pronounced in favour of the equality of the Son with the Father, or the doctrine generally regarded as orthodox, and condemned the Arians to exile, and their books to the flames. In spite of this decision, the Arian opinion appeared three years afterwards to prevail among the whole clergy of the East. It was sanctioned by a synod at Jerusalem, and protected by the emperor. When Constantius ascended the throne, all the bishops and courtiers by whom he was surrounded had adopted the opinions of Arius, and had communicated them to him. The emperor, abandoning all other cares, in order to devote himself exclusively to religious controversy, became a mere theologian, and remained so during the whole of his long reign. He employed his court and wore out his own intellect in finding expressions fitted for the shades of his belief, and the fluctuations of his sentiments. Every year he convoked some fresh synod or council; he removed bishops from their flocks; he destroyed religion in favour of theology; and as the bishops whom he was continually summoning from one province to another, travelled at the public cost, the multiplicity of councils became a ruinous charge on the imperial treasury. But a formidable adversary appeared, who opposed him with firmness, and rendered his efforts powerless. This was St.

Athanasius, archbishop of Alexandria, who was regarded as head of the orthodox party from the year 326 to 373. He met persecution with unshaken constancy, communicated his own zeal to the fanatical populace of Alexandria and the monks of the desert; and, after a long struggle between popular commotions and military persecutions, at length secured victory to his party.

During the whole of the reigns of the three sons of Constantine, historians scarcely seem to have regarded any thing as worthy of their notice save ecclesiastical disputes; nor did the sovereign seem to think his station and office imposed any duty upon him more imperative than that of engaging in the ranks of controversy. But the people had more than one occasion to feel that they needed protection from other perils than those of heresy. During the whole of this period the East was exposed to the attacks of Sapor II., king of Persia, whose long reign, from 310 to 380, by a singular destiny, had begun some months before his birth. On the death of his father Hormidas, his mother declared herself pregnant. She was presented to the adoration of the people reclining on a bed of state; and the crown, which was placed on the bed by the magi, was supposed to cover the head of the child the nation hoped to receive from her. Sapor II. evinced much more talents and courage than could be expected from a king born on the throne. He made repeated incursions into the Roman provinces of the East. In 348, he defeated Constantius in a great battle at Singara, near the Tigris. But his invasions were always checked by the fortress of Nisibis, the bulwark of the East. Thrice he besieged it with all his forces, and was thrice repulsed.

From the time of the death of the two brothers of Constantius, the West had suffered yet more severely. In order to reconquer it from the usurper Magnentius, that emperor had incited the Germanic nations to attack the northern frontier of Gaul, at the moment when civil war compelled Magnentius to leave the Rhine unprotected, and to march his legions into Illyricum. The Franks and Allemans consequently poured down, the former on Belgium, the latter on Alsace, and plundered and burnt forty-five of the most flourishing cities of either Gaul. Their cruelty inspired such terror, that no one throughout the remainder of the province dared to quit the shelter of the cities. Within the walls, the inhabitants cultivated portions of land amid the ruins, and trusted for subsistence to the produce of fields thus cleared by the de-

vastating hand of the invader. But 13,000 soldiers remained to defend the whole extent of Gaul against these torrents of barbarians; all the magazines, all the arsenals were emptied; the treasury was exhausted; the persons upon whom the burdens of the state rested, reduced to the uttermost distress, fled and abandoned their lands, rather than submit any longer to fiscal vexations. The defence of the West seemed to have become nearly impossible, when, in the year 355, Constantius intrusted it to his cousin Julian. The fury of persecution which he had exercised against his family had vented itself. He had promised to suffer his two cousins to live; and as he had now reached the middle of life without natural successors, he had resolved on delegating some authority to these his nearest relatives. In 351, he had granted the dignity of Cæsar to Gallus, the brother of Julian, and had sent him to Antioch; but as the power with which he was invested had called forth nothing but vice, Constantius recalled him in December, 354, and caused him to be beheaded in prison. A few months afterwards he invested the last survivor of this once numerous family with a similar authority, and gave him Gaul to govern.

Julian had known nothing of his exalted station but its exposure to more terrible calamity; but this had tried his courage, and fortified his soul. He had sought consolation in the philosophy of Greece, and in the study of antiquity. He had compared the virtues of former ages with the vices and crimes of his own time, and of the race whence he sprang; and, from a spirit of opposition to all that surrounded him, he had attached himself the more ardently to the religion of his fathers. He embraced polytheism with a fervour rare among its followers; with a superstitious devotion seemingly incompatible with his philosophical turn. But his religion had undergone a refining process, of which himself was not conscious, from its collision with Christianity. He had adopted many of the sublimest truths of the very faith he combated; and he thought he found them slightly veiled beneath the allegories of paganism. To him the interpreters of the antique gods were not the vulgar oracles of priests, but the divine writings of Plato and other philosophers; and the faith so lately dominant was endeared to him by its present persecutions; as the unfortunate become objects of sympathy to generous minds, even at the expense of justice and of reason.

In the schools of Athens, in the pursuit of philosophy, and in

the study of the ancients, Julian had acquired a knowledge of men and of things which none but a vast and commanding genius can obtain from theory alone. Passing from the most profound retirement to the command of an army and the government of a disorganized province, surrounded by spies and informers, who watched that they might destroy him, ill obeyed by his subalterns, ill seconded by his cousin's government, he raised up the humbled majesty of the empire in two glorious campaigns, (A. D. 356—357.) He defeated the Allemans at Strasburg, and drove them across the Rhine: during the three following years, he penetrated three several times into Germany: he struck terror into the Allemans, recalled the Franks to their ancient alliance, and admitted the bravest of their soldiers into his own ranks. He also enlisted the Gauls, who, at length, felt the necessity of defending their country and their personal existence. He restored ruined cities, filled the treasury, while he reduced the most oppressive taxes by two-thirds, and inspired the inhabitants of the West with an enthusiasm which was not unattended with danger to himself. The court of Byzantium had begun by ridiculing the philosopher turned general; but this soon gave way, in the mind of Constantius, to a feeling of bitter jealousy. In the account he rendered to the provinces of the victories obtained in Gaul, the emperor, who had never quitted the walls of Constantinople, took the credit of all these successes. It was he, as his proclamations affirmed, who, by his prudence, his valour, and his military talents, had repulsed the Germans. Julian was not even named.

The emperor's jealousy soon displayed itself by other signs. Sapor still hovered over the eastern frontier, and menaced it with fresh invasions. Constantius ordered the Gallic legions to abandon the Rhine and march to defend the Euphrates. This was to leave both countries without defence during a whole campaign; for it was impossible to accomplish such a march in less time. But Constantius was mainly bent on separating the Cæsar from his old companions in arms; and he anticipated a sweet revenge from the discontent of the legions, compelled to quit the chilling plains of Belgium for the burning sands of Mesopotamia. But he had not calculated on all the effects of this measure. The barbarians, whose enthusiasm for Julian had led them to enlist under his banner, the Gauls, who had shaken off their habitual sloth in defence of their hearths, refused to traverse the entire

Roman world at the capricious order of the emperor. They mutinied, saluted Julian with the title of Augustus, raised him aloft on a buckler, encircled his brow with the collar of a soldier, in default of a diadem; and then declared that they were ready to march into the East, not to gratify the vengeance of a jealous master, but to escort their adored chief as victor. Julian yielded to their enthusiasm. He set out towards Illyricum; but the death of Constantius, which happened on the 3d of November, 361, and which he learned half-way, averted the horrors of a civil war. Julian was acknowledged with joy throughout the empire.

He publicly returned thanks for his success to the ancient gods, and restored the pomp of pagan worship, which had not yet become an object of the persecution directed against heretics. He admitted all the contending sects of Christians to an equal tolerance; but this tolerance was mingled with sarcasms and expressions of contempt; and he endeavoured to undermine the foundations of a church which he dared not attempt to overthrow by violence. He prohibited Christians from entering the schools of grammar and of rhetoric; removed them from places of trust, and apportioned his favour to the zeal displayed in favour of polytheism. He soon achieved numerous conversions among those who are the faithful followers of power, and who have no other religion than the pleasure of the master.

Mean while Julian was impatient to drive the barbarians from the East, as he had already expelled them from the West. The whole remaining portion of his short reign was devoted to the preparations for his campaign against Sapor. To this end he repaired to Antioch, where he passed the winter of the year 362. At the commencement of the year 363, he marched to the invasion of Mesopotamia. But it was already obvious that he had not escaped the corrupting influence of power and prosperity. Deceived by the blind obedience of courtiers, he thought he could exercise the same haughty sway over those who were not dependent upon him. He offended the Arabs, at the very moment when he stood in need of their aid, by refusing the customary presents, and alienated the Armenians by openly condemning their religious opinions. He even fancied he could rise superior to the laws of nature, and command the elements. In spite of the remonstrances of his generals, he advanced into the sandy deserts, in which his army was exposed to thirst, fatigue, and a burning sun. It is true that these dangers once more re-

vealed the great and heroic qualities which prosperity had obscured. On every occasion he set his soldiers an example of that courage which endures privations, as well as of that which braves the fight. Never did he meet the enemy without defeating him. But Sapor, who did not choose to face the formidable and victorious legions of Gaul, harassed them with his light cavalry, and retreated without suffering the enemy to come up with him. After passing the Tigris, Julian, with his panting legions, traversed the whole territory of Bagdad, where he was misled by treacherous guides. On the verge of the horizon he saw a village or a city, in which he hoped to find some repose, some provisions; but as soon as he approached, devouring flames, kindled by the inhabitants themselves, consumed dwellings and stores, and he found only a heap of ashes. At length, on the 16th of June, 363, he was compelled to order a retreat. This was the signal for the approach of the Persians; the light cavalry was seconded by elephants, and by the heavy iron-barbed cavalry. Every march was a combat; every wood, every hill, concealed an ambuscade. On the 26th of June, the Romans being still at a considerable distance from the Tigris, a general attack led Julian to hope that he might still conquer the enemy who had always avoided the open fields. While, with his advanced guard, he received the intelligence that his rear-guard had been thrown into disorder by a charge of cavalry. He flew to its succour with no other arms than his buckler. The Persians fled, but Julian was struck by an arrow from the bow of one of those horsemen, who were never more formidable than in their flight. It had passed through the ribs, and transfixed the liver. As he tried to draw it out of the wound, another arrow pierced his fingers. He fell from his horse, fainting and bathed in his blood, and in that state was carried to his tent. As soon as he recovered his senses he called for his horse and his arms, and insisted on going to cheer on his comrades, many of whom he had seen trampled and crushed under the feet of the elephants. But it was too late: the blood which flowed in fresh torrents, soon exhausted his remaining strength. Being unable to raise himself, and conscious that the feebleness of death was upon him, he asked the name of the country where he had fallen. Phrygia, was the reply.—“It is there that my death was foretold;” said he. “My destiny is accomplished.”

His friends pressed around him. He to whom we are indebted for all these details,—the last of the illustrious soldiers who wrote in Latin the contemporaneous history of the Romans, Ammianus Marcellus, was present. They were in tears; and yet news had come to his tent, that the Romans, infuriated at his loss, had already worthily revenged him; that Sapor's army had taken to flight; that his two generals, fifty satraps, most of the elephants, and the bravest warriors of Persia were slain; that if Julian could once more lead on the army, the victory would be decisive.

“Friends, and brothers-in-arms,” said Julian, “the time for me to retire from life is come. As an honourable debtor I ought to render back to nature, who claims her own, that soul which she intrusted to me. I have too well learned of philosophy how superior is the soul to the body, now to afflict myself, nay, rather not to rejoice, that the nobler part regains its liberty. Have not the gods themselves sometimes granted death to the most pious of mortals, as the highest recompense of their virtue? This favour I am very sensible they have granted me to-day, that I might not sink under the difficulties which surround us—that I might not fall into any base or prostrate condition. As to the pains of the body, they overcome cowards, but they yield to the force of the will. I do not repent of my actions; I feel not in my conscience remorse for any great crime—neither when, hidden in the shade, I laboured to form my character and correct my faults, nor since the empire has been bestowed upon me. I flatter myself that I have kept spotless this soul which we receive from Heaven, and which has its source and its kindred there. I have sought to exercise moderation in civil government, nor have I ever undertaken or declined war without a careful examination of my rights. But success depends not on our counsels; it is for the celestial powers to direct the event of what we do but begin. I have ever thought that the end of a just authority ought to be the advantage and safety of those who obey; I have, therefore, sought to guard all my actions from that arbitrary license which is equally injurious to affairs and corrupting to morals. I render thanks to that Eternal Divinity which decreed before my birth that I should not fall a victim to clandestine toils, nor to the pains, the diseases, or the violent deaths which have been the lot of all my race; but has granted me a glorious exit from this world in the midst of a career of prosperity. My ebb-

ing strength does not permit me to say more. I think it prudent not to influence your choice in the nomination of an emperor. I might fail to distinguish the most worthy. I might expose to peril him whom I should point out to your suffrages, and whom you might not approve. My only desire is, that the republic may have a worthy head."

With his small remaining strength, Julian endeavoured to distribute his effects among the friends who surrounded him. He did not see among them Anatolius, to whom he wished to leave some token of remembrance. *He also is happy*, replied Sallustius; and Julian shed, for the fate of his friend, those tears which he denied to his own. All attempts to stop a fresh effusion of blood had been vain. Julian asked for a cup of cold water, and having drunk it, instantly expired.

Jovian, whom the army appointed his successor, bought the permission to effect a disastrous retreat, by abandoning to Sapor five provinces of Armenia, with the fortress of Nisibis, the bulwark of the Eastern empire.

CHAPTER V.

Jovian.—Depression of the Pagans.—Calamitous Period embraced by this Chapter.—Death of Jovian.—Election of Valentinian.—His Character.—Grinding Taxation.—Successes of the Roman Arms.—Feebleness of Valens.—Hermanric.—Gothic Empire in Dacia.—Death of Valentinian.—Gratian, Emperor of the West.—Invasion of Dacia by the Huns.—Horror inspired by their Aspect.—Defeat of the Goths.—They cross the Danube and take Refuge in the Empire.—Perfidy and Cruelty of Valens.—Revolt of the Goths.—Death of Valens.—Massacre of the Gothic Hostages.—Vengeance taken by Fritigern.—The Eastern Empire without a Head.—Theodosius the Great chosen as Colleague, and proclaimed by Gratian.—His Talents and Wisdom.—The Goths induced to lay down Arms.—Mœsia ceded to them.—Their Civilization.—Ulphilas.—Influence of the Franks at the Court of Gratian.—Death of Gratian.—Character of Theodosius.—Persecution of the Arians.—Discouragement of Paganism.—St. Gregory of Nazianzen.—St. Ambrose.—St. Martin.—Death of Theodosius.—A. D. 364—395.

EVERY fresh revolution that agitated the empire, urged it another downward step into the abyss which was destined soon to engulf it. Julian's imprudent endeavour to re-establish a religion which had received its death-stroke, to weaken the influence of one which he attacked by a covert persecution, and by a system of injustice, excited the most violent resentment among his Christian subjects, and exposed his name to accusations and calumnies which have stained his memory to this day. When his successor, Jovian, who did not reign long enough to lead back to Constantinople the army which he had marched from the banks of the Tigris, made public profession of Christianity, he, at the same time, displaced a great number of brave officers and able functionaries, whom Julian had promoted in proportion to their zeal for paganism. From that period, up to the fall of the empire, a hostile sect, which regarded itself as unjustly stripped of its ancient honours, invoked the vengeance of the gods on the heads of the government, exulted in the public calamities, and probably hastened them by its intrigues, though inextricably involved in the common ruin.

The pagan faith, which was not attached to a body of doctrine, nor supported by a corporation of priests, nor heightened by the

fervour of novelty, scarcely ever displayed itself in open revolt, or dared the perils of martyrdom; but pagans still occupied the foremost rank in letters:—the orators, the philosophers, (or, as they were otherwise called, sophists,) the historians, belonged, almost without an exception, to the ancient religion. It still kept possession of the most illustrious schools, especially those of Athens and Alexandria; the majority of the Roman senate were still attached to it; and in the breasts of the common people, particularly the rural population, it maintained its power for several centuries, branded, however, with the name of magic, a name eagerly given to a fallen religion which persecution forces into concealment. If the pagans wished that their dishonoured faith should be avenged on their fellow citizens and on themselves, they might enjoy this melancholy consolation in the thirty-two years, the events of which we are now about to retrace—the years which elapsed from the death of Julian to that of the great Theodosius (A. D. 363—395.) This period, though it produced some distinguished leaders, was marked by dreadful and atrocious calamities. The talents, even the genius, of some emperors, no longer sufficed to save the civilized world from the attacks of its barbarian foes, or from the more formidable peril of its own internal corruption. The vigour displayed by Valentinian in defence of the West, from the year 364 to 375; the imprudence of Valens, who laid open the interior of the empire to the Gothic nations, and the disasters which resulted from this, from 375 to 379; lastly, the policy of Theodosius the Great, who, from 379 to 395, succeeded in disarming enemies whom he could not subdue, will successively form the subject of our reflections.

Less than eight months after his elevation to the throne, on the 17th of February, 364, Jovian died in a small town of Galatia. After the expiration of ten days, the army which he was leading home from Persia, at a solemn assembly held at Nice, in Bithynia, chose as his successor the son of a captain from a little village of Pannonia, the count Valentinian, whom his valour and bodily prowess had raised to one of the highest posts of the army. Valentinian, who had distinguished himself in Gaul, knew no language but Latin, no science but that of war. Having given proofs of independence of character in a subordinate condition, he thought to preserve a certain consistency of virtue by showing himself firm, inflexible, prompt, often cruel, in his judgments. He forgot, that to resist power demands courage; to crush weak-

ness, needs only brutality. Spite of his savage rudeness, and the furious violence of his temper, the Roman empire found in him an able chief at the moment of its greatest need. Unhappily, the extent of the empire required, at least, two rulers. The army felt this, and demanded a second. "If you think of your country," said a brave officer to him, "choose a colleague from among her children; if you think only of yourself, you have a brother." Valentinian showed no irritation, but he chose his brother. Valens, with whom he shared his power, had the weak, timid, and cruel character which ordinarily distinguishes cowards. Valentinian, born in the West, speaking only the language, and attached to the manners and the climate of the West, reserved the government of it to himself. He ceded to his brother a part of Illyricum on the Danube, and the whole of the East. He established universal toleration by law, and took no part in the sectarian controversies which divided Christendom. Valens adopted the Arian faith, and persecuted the orthodox party.

The finances of the empire demanded a reform, which neither of the emperors was in a condition to undertake. They wanted money, and they were ignorant where to seek the long exhausted sources of public wealth. Three direct taxes, equally ruinous, pressed upon the citizens; the indictions, or territorial impost, calculated on the third of the income, and often doubled or tripled by superindictions, which the necessities of the provinces compelled the government to exact; the capitation or poll tax, which sometimes amounted to a sum equivalent to twelve pounds sterling per head, and the heavy gratuitous labours imposed for the service of the land, and the transport of the commodities belonging to the revenue. These taxes had so utterly ruined the land-holders, that in all parts of the country they abandoned estates, which no longer produced enough to pay the charges upon them. Vast provinces in the interior were deserted; enlistments daily became more scanty and difficult; the magistrates of the *curiæ* or municipalities, who were responsible both for the contributions and the levies of their respective towns, sought by a thousand subterfuges to escape the perilous honour of the magistrature. Some were seen taking refuge on the estates of some powerful senator, concealing themselves among his slaves, voluntarily submitting to the brand of infamy, in the hope that it would disqualify them from charges so ruinous. In vain; they

were forcibly dragged from their ignominious retreat, and reinvested with the marks of these dreaded dignities. Then, when any disorder excited the anger of Valentinian, he called them to account for it with transports of fury. On one occasion he ordered the lictors to bring him the heads of three magistrates of each town throughout a whole province. "Will your clemency be pleased to order," said the prefect Florentius, "what we are to do in the case of towns which do not contain three magistrates?" The order was revoked. Though the emperor was a Christian, the people and the monks almost always inscribed in the list of martyrs those who fell victims to his brutal rage. During the whole of the reigns of Constantine and his sons, the internal suffering of the empire had continued to increase. The mitigation of it effected by Julian was but temporary, and confined to a small number of provinces; and his fatal expedition into Syria, which destroyed the finest army of the empire, increased the necessities of the government, and forced it to have recourse to still more disastrous expedients.

During the twelve years that Valentinian reigned over the West (A. D. 364—376,) he redeemed his cruelties by several brilliant victories. He drove the Allemans out of Gaul and Rhætia, which they had invaded and laid waste, and pursued them into their own country, where he again conquered them. He then excited a war between them and the Burgundians, whom he persuaded to come as far as the banks of the Rhine to avenge a quarrel they had had with the Allemans concerning certain salt-works. Valentinian had undertaken the defence of Gaul in person, and generally resided at Trèves, then the capital of that vast prefecture; but at the time he was thus occupied, invasions not less formidable had devastated the other provinces of the West. The different tribes of Scots, forefathers of those Highlanders who were still so nearly in a savage state, when they invaded England in 1745, marched across the whole extent of Britain. Their path was marked by cruelties so atrocious, that it was believed at the time, and recorded by St. Jerome, that they lived on human flesh. London, even, was threatened by them; and the whole island, which, like all the other provinces of the empire, had lost every spark of military virtue, was incapable of opposing any resistance to them. Theodosius, a Spanish officer, and father of the great man of the same name who was afterwards associated in the empire, was charged by

Valentinian with the defence of Britain. He forced the Scots to fall back (A. D. 367—370,) but without having been able to bring them to an engagement. Scarcely had he delivered the Britons from these savage enemies, when Valentinian intrusted to him the conduct of a war of equal difficulty against the Moors, whom intolerable oppression had driven to revolt, and who had found in Firmus, one of their native princes, tributary to Rome, an able and experienced leader. Theodosius pursued him with undaunted ardour and perseverance across the burning plains of Gætulia and the gorges of Mount Atlas. He gave him no rest; and after defeating him in several battles, left him no other resource than a voluntary death. But Theodosius experienced the fate frequently reserved to eminent men under the tyrants of Rome. He wrote to the emperor that the revolt of the Moors was the work of the prefect Romanus, whose insupportable tyranny had reduced them to a state of desperation. He urged his recall, as the only means of saving the province. To complain, on whatever ground or whatever provocation, is to call in question the virtue or the wisdom of the despot. The emperor resented this offence. He caused his virtuous general to be beheaded at Carthage, and rewarded Romanus for his crimes.

At this period Valens reigned over the Greeks, whose language he did not understand (A. D. 364—378.) His eastern frontier was menaced by the Persians, his northern by the Goths. It is true, that, observing with still greater timidity than real weakness, the shameful peace which Jovian had concluded with the former, he endeavoured to disarm Sapor, to whom the strong places on the frontier had been given up. But one of the disgraceful conditions of a treaty imposed on the Romans, was the desertion of the king of Armenia, and his neighbour the king of Iberia. Both were attacked by Sapor. The former, deceived by an artful negotiation, was treacherously invited to a feast, where he was loaded with chains, and afterwards massacred. The latter was compelled to flee. Armenia and Iberia became subject to Persia; but as the people of both these countries were Christian, they remained faithful to the interests of Rome, though conquered by her enemy. A son of the king of Armenia, named Para, found his father's subjects ever ready to take up arms in his favour: the frequent revolts of the Armenians kept the Persian frontier in a state of insecurity and disquiet, and occupied the arms of Sapor in his old age. Para would, indeed, eventu-

ally have triumphed, and have established the independence of Armenia, had not the emperor Valens, by a policy wholly inexplicable, caused him to be assassinated, in the year 374, in the midst of an entertainment which he gave his generals.

The dominion of the Goths extended along the shores of the Danube and the Black Sea, and thirty years had elapsed since they had made any incursion into the Roman territory. But, during that period they had gone on increasing in greatness and in power. The aged Hermanric, the most illustrious of the Amalian race, reigned over the whole nation; his power had extended from the Ostrogoths to the Visigoths, then to the Gepidæ. He had pushed his conquests to the shores of the Baltic; the Esthonians and the Russians, or Roxolani, were among his subjects, as well as the Henetes of the plains of Poland, and the Heruli of the Palus Mæotides. At the beginning of the reign of Valens, an attempt of Procopius, a distant relation of Julian, to get himself crowned at Constantinople, had drawn the Goths, his allies, to the south of the Danube. They were, however, repulsed in three campaigns, (A. D. 367—369,) and peace was re-established on that frontier. Spite of the formidable neighbourhood of the Goths and the Persians—spite of the cowardice and the incapacity of Valens—the East had remained at peace, protected by the mere name of Valentinian, whose military talents, promptitude, and severity, were known to all the barbarian tribes. But the career of this remarkable man, so dreaded by his enemies and by his subjects, had now reached its term. He was carrying war into Pannonia against the Quadi, and having granted an audience to the ambassadors of that nation, who came as suppliants to demand peace, gave way to so violent a fit of rage against them, that he burst a blood-vessel in his chest, and died in their presence, stifled by his own blood, which gushed in torrents from his mouth, (Nov. 17, 375.) His two sons,—Gratian, who was scarcely come to manhood, and Valentinian, still a child,—shared the West between them; while Valens, who had been thought incompetent to fill the second place, now remained in possession of the supreme power in the East.

Never, however, was the empire in greater need of an able and vigorous head. The entire nation of the Huns, abandoning to the Sienpi its ancient pastures bordering on China, had traversed the whole north of Asia by a march of 1300 leagues. This immense horde, swelled by all the conquered nations whom

it carried along in its passage, bore down on the plains of the Alans, and defeated them on the banks of the Tanaïs in a great battle. It received into its body a part of the vanquished tribe, accompanied by which it continued to advance towards the West; while other Alans, too haughty to renounce their independence, had retreated, some into Germany, whence we shall see them afterwards pass into Gaul; others into the Caucasian mountains, where they preserve their name to this day.

The Goths who bordered on the Alans had fertilized by their labours the rich plains which lie to the north of the Danube and of the Black Sea. More civilized than any of the kindred Germanic tribes, they began to make rapid progress in the social sciences. They addicted themselves to agriculture; they cultivated the arts; they improved their language; they collected the traditions, sung, or, perhaps, inscribed, in the Runic character, which preserved the memory of their migrations, and of the exploits of their fathers; they kept up an advantageous intercourse with Greece, by means of which Christianity began to find its way among them; and, while they had gained more extensive knowledge, and more humane manners, they had lost nothing of their love of liberty, nor of their bravery. This comparatively fortunate state of things was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of the Huns,—the unlooked-for arrival of that savage nation, which, from the moment it crossed the Borysthenes, or the Dnieper, began to burn their villages and their crops; to massacre, without pity, men, women, and children; to devastate and destroy whatever came within the reach of a Scythian horseman. Their language was understood by none: the Goths even doubted whether its shrill and dissonant sounds were those of any human speech. Their name had never been heard in Europe. Northern superstition soon accounted for the sudden apparition of these armed myriads, by supposing them the offspring of infernal spirits,—the only fit consorts, they said, of women, the outcasts of Europe, who had been driven into deserts for the practice of arts of magic.

The hideous aspect of the Huns gave colour to this devilish genealogy. “They put to flight,” says Jornandes, the Gothic historian, “by the terror inspired by their countenance, those whom their bravery would never have subdued. The livid colour of their skin had something frightful in it; it was not a face, but a formless mass of flesh, in which two black and sinister

spots filled the place of eyes. Their cruelty wreaked itself upon their own children, whose cheeks they lacerated with iron before they had tasted their mothers' milk. For this reason, no down shaded their chin in youth, no beard gave dignity to their old age." Their bodies seemed no less disgusting than their faces. "Their aspect was not that of men," says Ammianus Marcellinus, "but of beasts standing on their hind legs, as it were in mockery of our species."

The great Hermanric, whose kingdom extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea, would not have abandoned his sceptre to the Huns without a struggle, but, at this very time, he was murdered by a domestic enemy. The nations he had subjugated, prepared, on every side, for rebellion. The Ostrogoths, after a vain resistance, broke their alliance with the Visigoths; while the latter, like an affrighted flock of sheep, trooping together from all parts of their vast territory to the right bank of the Danube, refused to combat those superhuman beings by whom they were pursued. They stretched out their supplicating hands to the Romans on the other bank, entreating that they might be permitted to seek a refuge from the butchery which threatened them, in those wilds of Mœsia and Thrace which were almost valueless to the empire. They promised to bring them into a state of cultivation, to pay the taxes on the land, and to defend it with their arms. Valens, who for five years had fixed his residence at Antioch, learned with surprise that an empire equal to his own in extent, superior in valour, and so long the object of his terror, had suddenly crumbled into dust, and that his most formidable enemies were now imploring to become his subjects.

Humanity enjoined him to grant the petition of the Goths; perhaps even policy dictated it; but baser motives determined the emperor, his counsellors, and the subalterns charged with the execution of his orders. Their sordid cupidity soon rendered odious the hospitality they offered to the Goths. The emperor had imposed two conditions on their reception; the one, that they should lay down their arms, the other, that they should give up their children as hostages. The officers charged with the duty of receiving the arms, suffered themselves to be seduced by bribes into a connivance at the non-execution of this order. Yet, when the transport, not of an army, but of a nation, was accomplished, when 200,000 warriors, exclusive of women and children, had crossed the Danube, which, on the north of Mœsia, is

above a mile in width, the imperial officers tried to profit by a famine, real or feigned, to strip those of gold whom they had left in possession of steel. All the necessities of life were sold to them at the prices of an exorbitant monopoly. Never was avarice more blind; never did besotted government more effectually prepare its own ruin.

So long as the most vile and unwholesome food could be purchased at the price of money, of effects, of slaves, the Goths consented to strip themselves. The fear of endangering their hostages sustained their endurance to its utmost term; they even sold the children who were left them, and whom they could no longer feed, to buy sustenance for a few days. But when the distrust of the Romans, increasing with their injuries, led them to take measures for dispersing the Goths over the whole empire, and troops were assembled to crush them if they offered resistance, this very attempt to sever did but strengthen the ties that united them. Their chief, Fritigern, formerly designated by the title of Judge, began to take upon himself the character and functions of sovereign; and a violent quarrel having broken out at Marcianople, the capital of Lower Mœsia, between the oppressed and the oppressors, Lupicinus, the general of Valens, was defeated, his army put to flight, and the oppressed guests of the Romans found themselves masters of Mœsia.

The first success secured nearly all that were to follow. At the news of it, the Ostrogoths, who had maintained their independence against the Huns, passed the Danube arms in hand, and joined the Visigoths. Long before the invasion of the Huns, a great number of young Goths had entered the Roman service as an advantageous and honourable career: they now raised the standard of revolt, and went over to their countrymen. But the most dangerous of the auxiliaries of the barbarian army were the slaves, who fled in all directions from their inhuman masters, especially those who had been condemned to labour in the mines of Mount Rhodope: they craved vengeance at the hands of the stranger, and, in return, communicated their knowledge of the country, and the secret intelligence they had means of procuring. Notwithstanding these advantages, war was carried on for two years with various success. On the side of Valens, Roman discipline, and the possession of arsenals, magazines, and fortresses, counterbalanced the bravery of the Goths and the talents of Fritigern. But the pride of the emperor of the East could only be

satisfied by a victory gained under his auspices. He marched in person against the Goths with a most brilliant army; he would not wait for Gratian, who was advancing from the West to his assistance. His defeat at Adrianople, on the 9th of August, 378, after which he perished in the flames of a hovel in which he had sought refuge, left the empire without a defender.

The forces of the East were nearly annihilated at the terrible battle of Adrianople: more than 60,000 Roman soldiers perished in the fight or in the pursuit; and the time was long past when such a loss could have been easily repaired by fresh levies. Nevertheless, even after this frightful massacre, the walls of Adrianople still opposed an unconquerable resistance to the barbarians. Valour may supply the place of military science in the open field, but civilized nations recover all the advantages of the art of war in the attack or defence of fortified towns. Fritigern quitted Adrianople, declaring that he made no war upon stones. But, with the exception of a few great cities, the Romans had neglected the fortifications of the provincial towns: to defend them, it would have been necessary to arm the citizens, to train them to war, to place within their reach means of resistance which they might have turned to the purposes of revolt or of civil war. Empires are nodding to their fall, when their rulers are more in dread of subjects than of external foes: this dread is almost invariably the proof of injuries, by which they have earned the hatred and vengeance of the people. The Goths, leaving Adrianople in their rear, advanced, ravaging all around them, to the foot of the walls of Constantinople; and, after some unimportant skirmishes, returned westward through Macedonia, Epirus, and Dalmatia. From the Danube to the Adriatic, their passage was marked by conflagration and blood.

Whilst the European provinces of the Greek empire sunk under these calamities, the Asiatic provinces took a horrible vengeance on the authors of them. We have said, that before the Goths were permitted to pass the Danube, they were compelled to give up their children as hostages; that those whom their parents had been able to retain at that time, were afterwards sold for any sum that would purchase present sustenance for their famishing fathers; that the peril of these children had long been the only tie that had withheld the army of the barbarians, who even in selling them, had sought to save them from starvation. When their patience was, at length, utterly exhausted,—when

the whole East resounded with the noise of their exploits,—these devoted children, with a daring far beyond their strength, unarmed as they were, and dispersed through all the towns of Asia, celebrated the triumph of their fathers; they sang the songs of their country; they would speak no language but their native tongue; they exulted in the hope that they should soon share in these victories,—soon join the ranks of their countrymen. The inhabitants of the East, alarmed or incensed, saw, or pretended to see, in these imprudent demonstrations of youthful feeling, threatenings of a general revolt. Julius, commander-in-chief of the forces of the East, denounced them to the senate of Constantinople, as conspirators, and asked for orders; for the empire had remained, since the death of Valens, without a head. The senate imprudently recurred to the arbitrary constitutions of that republic, the tutelary provisions of which they completely disregarded. It authorized Julius to take care that the republic received no detriment, (*caveant consules ne quid*, &c.) The young Goths were allured, by treacherous promises, into the capital of each province. Scarcely were they assembled in the Forum, when all the avenues were invested by guards, bowmen appeared on the roofs of all the houses, and, at a given signal, on the same day and hour throughout all the cities of Asia, the whole body of this noble and ardent youth was assailed, unarmed and defenceless, by a shower of darts, and then slaughtered without mercy.

An atrocious act of cruelty is almost always a sign of cowardice, not of courage. The orientals, who, in thus massacring thousands of young men, seemed resolved to destroy all possibility of a reconciliation with their fathers, never dared to meet those fathers in the field. The same terror with which the Huns had so lately inspired the Goths, they in their turn struck into the Greeks. Nay, the hostile races, Scythian and Teutonic, had united for the destruction of the Roman empire. The Huns, who had penetrated into Dacia, had stopped there, and had pitched their tents. The captain who had led them thither was dead; civil discords broke out in their hordes; and it was no longer in pursuit of a general war, but in the quest of private adventures, that several divisions of Huns and Alans crossed the Danube, contracted an alliance with Fritigern, and seconded the steady and thoughtful valour of the Goths by a numerous and active cavalry.

No general in the East attempted to take advantage of the

anarchy in favour of his own ambition; no army offered the purple to its chief; all dreaded the responsibility of command at so tremendous a crisis. All eyes were turned on the court of Trèves, the only point whence help was hoped for. But Gratian, eldest son of Valentinian, and emperor of the West, was only nineteen. He had, indeed, even at that early age, acquired some renown in arms, especially through the counsels of an ambitious Frank named Merobaudes, one of the kings of that warlike people, who had not scorned the title of count of the domestics of the imperial court, and who, uniting his influence over his countrymen to the arts and intrigues of a courtier, had become the arbiter of the West. Gratian marched upon Illyricum with his army, when he learned the event of the battle of Adrianople, and the death of Valens, who had been so eager to secure the undivided honours of victory, that he would not wait for his arrival. Incapable of confronting such a tempest, he retreated to Sirmium. The news of an invasion of the Allemans into Gaul recalled him to the defence of his own territory. Danger started up on every hand at once. The empire stood in need of a new chief, and one of approved valour. Gratian had the singular generosity to choose from among his enemies, and from a sense of merit alone. Theodosius the Spaniard, his father's general, who had successively vanquished the Scots, and afterwards the Moors, and who had been unjustly condemned to the scaffold at the beginning of Gratian's reign, had left a son thirty-three years of age, who bore his name. The younger Theodosius had distinguished himself in the command he held in Mœsia, but was living in retirement and disgrace on his estates in Spain, when, with the confidence of a noble mind, Gratian chose him out, presented him to the army, on the 19th of January, 379, and declared him his colleague, and emperor of the East.

The task imposed on the great Theodosius was infinitely difficult. The abandonment of the Danube had opened the entrance of the empire not only to the Goths, but to all the tribes of Germany and Scythia. They overran the immense Illyrian peninsula from one end to the other, unresisted, yet with unabated fury. The blood of the young Goths which had been shed in Asia was daily avenged with interest over all that remained of Mœsian, Thrasian, Dalmatian, or Grecian race. It was more particularly during these four years of extermination that the Goths acquired the fatal celebrity attached to their name, which

is still that of the destroyers of civilization. Theodosius began by strengthening the fortified cities, recruiting the garrisons, and exercising his soldiers in small engagements whenever he felt assured of success: he then waited to take advantage of circumstances; he sought to divide his enemies by intrigue, and, above all, strenuously disavowed the rapacity of the ministers of Valens, or the cruelty of Julius; he took every occasion of declaring his attachment and esteem for the Gothic people, and at length, succeeded in persuading them that his friendship was sincere: happy in the peaceful state of his Asian frontier: happy that the aged Sapor II., or his effeminate successor Artaxerxes II., did not attempt an attack on the Roman empire, which would infallibly have succeeded.

The very victories of the Goths, their pride, their intemperance, at length impaired their energy. Fritigern, who, in the most difficult moments, had led them on with so much ability, was dead: the jealousies of independent tribes were rekindled; they refused to obey a common chief. The people of Scythia, the Huns, the Alans, who had shared in the plunder of the empire, now separated themselves from the Germans. They condemned the Goths for their flight; and the Goths felt their antipathy to them to be strong as ever. Theodosius dexterously profited by these seeds of discord; he drew successively into his service several leaders of the malecontents; he soon convinced the barbarians that they would find more riches, more enjoyment, in the pay of the emperor, than they could conquer by the sword in provinces laid waste by the fury of merciless invaders. He was careful to afford so much countenance and support to those whom he had received under his banners, that the example became contagious. It was by a series of treaties with as many independent chieftains, that the nation was at length induced to lay down its arms: the last of these treaties was concluded on the 30th of October, 382. It restored peace to the Eastern empire, six years after the Goths crossed the Danube.

This formidable nation was thus finally established within the boundary of the empire of the East. The vast regions they had ravaged were abandoned to them, if not in absolute sovereignty, at least on terms little at variance with their independence. The Goths settled in the bosom of the empire had no kings; their hereditary chiefs were consulted under the name of judges, but their power was unchanged; they were still the military com-

manders, the presidents of popular assemblies, who administered justice and government. The Goths gave a vague sort of recognition to the sovereignty of the Roman emperor; but they submitted neither to his laws, his magistrates, nor his taxes. They engaged to maintain 40,000 men for the service of Theodosius; but they were to remain a distinct army, to obey no leaders but such as they chose themselves, to be in no way confounded with the Roman soldiery, and to be distinguished by the title of federated troops. The labours of agriculture, which they had been forced to abandon in Dacia, they now resumed in Mœsia and all the country lying on the right of the Danube. They portioned out waste lands. By their intermixture with the original inhabitants, they acquired new branches of knowledge, and followed up the progress they had already made in civilization. It was, probably, at this period, that their apostle, bishop Ulphilas, who had translated the Gospels into their tongue, invented the Mœso-Gothic character, which bears the name of their new abode. Occupying the border country between the two empires and the two languages, they borrowed something from each, even in their alphabet. At the same time that they were virtual masters of these provinces, their leaders offered themselves as candidates for all posts and employments at the court of Constantinople. From these they passed to the command of provinces; and the great Theodosius found himself compelled to decorate several Goths with the consulate; for the two emperors yearly agreed on the election of those ancient magistrates of the republic, now without functions, and serving little other purpose than to give their names to the year in the consular fasti.

Thus, then, the empire still subsisted, but the barbarians possessed both the force of arms and the authority of magistratures; already were they established as a compact national body within her frontiers. Theodosius conferred the consulate on Goths, and his colleague, Gratian, on Franks—among others on Merobaudes, chief of that warlike nation. The Frankish people had contracted a useful alliance with the empire. It supplied nearly the whole of the armies of the West, and exclusively guided the counsels of the court. About this epoch, however, the young Gratian, who had early obtained a brilliant reputation, having delivered Gaul from a formidable invasion by a decisive victory obtained over the Allemans, near Colmar, in the month of May, 378, began to lose his popularity and the support of his Germanic allies.

Passionately addicted to the chase, he was struck with admiration at the superior skill of the Scythian archers. He took into his pay a considerable body of those Alans who had been obliged to leave the Huns on the banks of the Wolga. He established them on the Seine, made them the companions of his sports and exercises, formed them into a body guard, and even wore their dress. The Romans, and the Franks their confederates, equally regarded this preference as an insult. The legions of Britain revolted, and placed the purple on the senator Maximus: those of Gaul deserted Gratian; and the young emperor, constrained to flee, was killed at Lyons on the 25th of August, 383. Theodosius, at that time occupied by a new aggression of the Ostrogoths, and the Gruthungians, whom he defeated, and Valentinian II., who, while yet a child, wielded the sceptre of Italy and Africa, were both compelled to acknowledge Maximus as the colleague whom the will of the soldiery had given them. (A. D. 383—387.)

The history of the reign of Theodosius is very imperfectly known. Contemporary historians, either of the Eastern or Western empire, are wholly wanting to that period. Nevertheless, the title of Great has been handed down to bespeak the admiration of posterity. So far as we can judge, he seems to have merited this title, in the first place, by his military talents, always the surest claim to vulgar distinction; and secondly, by a considerable degree of prudence in the difficult government of a tottering state; by a generosity which broke forth with singular lustre on some occasions, and by domestic virtues and affections, purity of manners, and gentleness in his social relations,—qualities always rare in an exalted station, rarest of all on the throne of Constantinople. Yet it was neither his victories, nor his talents, nor his virtues, that procured him the title of Great, or the zeal with which his name has been celebrated from age to age: it was, above all, the protection he afforded to the orthodox church,—a protection which extended its triumph over heretics and pagans, but which, in accordance with the spirit of his age, was stained with the most odious intolerance.

When Theodosius ascended the throne of the East, Arianism, favoured by Valens, was the dominant faith, especially at Constantinople. The patriarch was Arian; the majority of the clergy, and the monks, and the great mass of the people, were attached to that form of Christianity. Theodosius, trained in the

opposite creed, declined engaging in the subtle disputes of the Greeks, or examining for himself the different confessions of faith, or the evidence by which they were supported. He deemed it more prudent to make choice of two living symbols,—two prelates, whom, in his first religious edict, (A. D. 380,) he declared to be “the treasures of the true doctrine.” Their names were Damasus, bishop of Rome, and Peter, bishop of Alexandria. Those whose faith was in conformity with that of these two luminaries of the church, were declared the sole orthodox, the sole Catholic, and were to remain sole possessors of all the churches, of all the ecclesiastical foundations, and of all property bequeathed to the clergy. All others were rejected as outcasts from the bosom of the church; sentenced, in fifteen successive edicts, to punishments continually increasing in severity; deprived of the exercise of their civil rights,—among others, of that of bequest; they were driven from their houses, then into exile; and lastly, those guilty of certain heresies, as, for instance, the Quarto-decimans, who celebrated Easter on the same days as it is observed by the Jews, instead of celebrating it on a Sunday, as Christians do, were sentenced to death. At the same time a new magistrature,—that of inquisitors of the faith,—was instituted by Theodosius, to act at once as spies, and as judges of the secret opinions of his subjects.

A sort of instinct of justice withheld these magistrates, for the present, from exacting from pagans as rigid an account of their thoughts as from heretics; they seemed to recognise the rights of long possession, the sacredness of time-hallowed opinions, and the potency of habit. Many of the most distinguished senators, orators, and philosophers of Rome, still publicly professed the antique faith. Theodosius did not venture to attach any punishment to the manifestation of their sentiments; he contented himself with prohibiting the most essential act of the primitive religion: he declared a sacrifice to the gods to be an act of high treason, and, in consequence, punishable with death.

That church, which had so lately escaped from the persecutions of the pagans, now demanded, with a deplorable zeal, to be permitted to persecute in its turn. Three men who lived in the reign of Theodosius, rise distinguished from the ranks of the clergy, and surpass all their rivals in talent, force of character, and even in virtue;—St. Gregory Nazianzen, for a time patriarch of Constantinople; St. Ambrose, archbishop of Milan; and

St. Martin, archbishop of Tours. All three powerfully contributed to fan the flame of persecution. St. Gregory, installed by soldiers in the cathedral of Constantinople, in defiance of the opposition of the whole flock intrusted to his care, lent his aid to the expulsion of the Arian clergy, having first stripped them of their functions, and substituted others in their places; and when he had himself abdicated that exalted station, he continued to exhort his successor, Nectarius, not to relax in zeal against the heretics. At Milan, St. Ambrose would not extend the benefit of toleration so much as to his own emperor, Valentinian II., who had been educated by his mother, Justina, regent of Italy and of Africa, in Arian opinions. Ambrose refused the emperor, his mother, and the Gothic soldiers who formed his body guard, the use of a single church; he assembled the people in the Basilica, (A. D. 386,) to defend it against the soldiers. To this popular resistance the celebrated Ambrosian chant owes its origin. The ceaseless chanting of the psalms, which intermitted not day or night, was the means of preserving the wakeful watch of the multitude who guarded the holy places. Lastly, St. Martin, who may be regarded as the great apostle of the Gauls, placed himself at the head of a troop of armed people, and undertook the destruction of the idols and their sanctuaries throughout his neighbourhood. (A. D. 389.) The peasants sometimes attempted resistance, but they soon paid for their temerity with their lives. On this occasion a judicial investigation was set on foot; but the saints declared, and the judges admitted, that the blood of the pagans had not been shed by the armed multitude led on by St. Martin to the attack of their temples, but that devils and angels had combated in these places, and the idolaters had merely shared the fate of the infernal spirits with whom they were leagued.

The influence which religion exercised over Theodosius was more worthy of her, and more consolatory to those who watch the effects of her power over men, in the penance enjoined upon him by St. Ambrose in expiation of a heavy crime. Theodosius was subject to the most violent transports of rage; and that mildness for which he is extolled, vanished before the fits of anger which troubled his reason. Twice he was thus exasperated by the sedition of two of the largest cities of his states. Antioch, capital of Syria and of the whole Levant, one of the most flourishing towns of the empire, revolted, on the 26th of Febru-

ary, 387, against an edict enforcing fresh taxes, and dragged the statues of the emperor in the mud. The city was soon reduced to submission, but four and twenty hours elapsed before it was known what punishment was decreed by Theodosius, who was then at Constantinople. His first orders were cruel: a great number of senators were to be beheaded, many wealthy citizens to be stripped of their property, all the distributions of bread were to be stopped, and the capital of the East to surrender all its privileges, and be reduced to the rank of a village. The magistrates, however, were slow in the execution of these orders, they even interceded with Theodosius, who, after considerable delay, granted full pardon. The fate of Thessalonica was more cruel. That powerful city, capital of the whole Illyrian province, rose in insurrection, on an occasion so insignificant as certain games of the Circus, to obtain the liberty of a skilful charioteer who had been imprisoned, (A. D. 390.) Botheric, commandant of the city, was killed, together with several of his officers, while endeavouring to suppress the sedition, and his body treated with the greatest indignity by the populace. Theodosius, who was then at Milan with Valentinian II., immediately gave orders that 7000, or, according to some, 15,000, Thessalonian heads should fall as a punishment for this rebellion. The inhabitants were invited to the Circus, as if to the celebration of new games; while they were waiting for the signal for the departure of the chariots, a body of soldiers rushed in upon them, and slaughtered without distinction of innocence or guilt, of sex or age. This horrible butchery lasted three hours, when the tribute of heads exacted by the emperor was collected.

When the news of this massacre reached St. Ambrose at Milan, he manifested the liveliest grief. He wrote to Theodosius, on no account to show himself in a church, stained as he was with innocent blood. Theodosius, having disregarded this interdict, was stopped by St. Ambrose, at the head of his clergy, on the portico of the temple which he was about to enter. "David, the king who was well pleasing to God," said the emperor, "was much more guilty than I, for he joined adultery to murder."—"If you have imitated David in his guilt, imitate him in his repentance," replied the archbishop. His courageous remonstrances intimidated the monarch, who submitted to the chastisement of the church. He laid aside the imperial ornaments, and confessed his sins with the deepest sorrow and humiliation in the

presence of the people; nor was it till after eight months of penitence that he was restored to the bosom of the church.

The authority of Theodosius did not extend over the West. His residence at Milan was only the consequence of the succour he had afforded to his colleague, Valentinian II., who had been attacked by surprise and driven out of Italy, in 387, by Maximus, emperor of Gaul. Maximus was defeated on the banks of the Save, in June, 388, and beheaded by order of Theodosius, who, at the same time, ceded to Valentinian, who had become his brother-in-law, Gaul, and all the remaining countries of the West. The new reign of this young prince was not of long duration. He removed the seat of his court to Vienne on the Rhone, where he was assassinated on the 15th of May, 392, by order of Arbogastes, general of the Franks, whose authority had long predominated over that of his master. Two years elapsed before Theodosius was able to return to the West, to avenge his colleague. On the 6th of September, 394, at the foot of the Julian Alps, he vanquished Eugenius the grammarian, whom Arbogastes had set up as a phantom emperor. After this victory he was acknowledged, without a rival or a colleague, throughout the Roman empire. But already his life was drawing to its close. He was attacked by a dropsy, which appears to have been the consequence of his intemperance, and survived his victory but four months. He died at Milan on the 17th of January, 395, aged fifty years, leaving the Roman world exposed to a host of calamities, which his talents and his courage had hardly sufficed to avert or to suspend.

CHAPTER VI.

Degradation of the Roman Soldiery.—Destruction of the Middle Classes.—Recklessness and Corruption of the Higher and the Lower.—Massacre of Thessalonica.—Arcadius and Honorius, Sons of Theodosius; their Imbecility.—Stilicho; his great Qualities.—State of the West under Arcadius.—Invasion of Greece, by Alaric, King of the Visigoths.—Italy invaded by Alaric; Defended by Stilicho.—Defeat of Alaric.—Cowardice of Honorius.—Great and final Invasion of the allied Barbarians.—Causes of the simultaneous Movement among the Germanic Nations.—They cross the Rhine, and ravage Gaul.—Invasion of Spain by the Suevi, Vandals, and Alans.—Conduct of Honorius to Stilicho.—Massacre of the Barbarian Hostages.—Second War with Alaric.—Rome taken and pillaged by Alaric.—His Death.—Peace with the Visigoths.—Cession of Aquitaine.—Marriage of Alaric's Successor, Ataulphus, or Adolf, with Placidia, a Sister of the Emperor.—A. D. 395—423.

THE great Theodosius, who had frequently been seen to pass from the energetic activity of a warrior to the indolence and luxurious indulgence of a Sybarite, is accused, by Zosimus, of having corrupted the manners of his age, and precipitated the fall of the empire. Zosimus constantly writes under the influence of a feeling of personal hostility; and, certainly, when we recollect who and what were the predecessors of Theodosius,—what the Romans were under Tiberius and Nero, what they were under Gallienus,—it does appear that there was very little to corrupt; and that Theodosius, who was faithful to his domestic obligations, a good father and a good husband, even during those intervals of luxurious ease with which he is reproached, can scarcely be regarded as a corrupter. Nevertheless, it is incontestable, that, during his reign, a last step was made towards that utter degradation of mind, that prostration of spirit, which manifested itself during the shameful reign of his two sons, and which shook the colossus of the Roman empire to its base. Then it was, that soldiers, who did not blush to call themselves Romans, laid down their arms in the field; then it was, that that awful infantry, which had been used to fight foot to foot, and to rush, armed with its terrible short sword, on the ranks it had broken with its hurled spear, was transformed into a troop of timid bowmen, destitute of all defensive armour, and compelled

to flee from every near attack of the enemy. Then it was, that in the cities, the citizens showed the most invincible repugnance to undertaking any public functions, which they avoided by the most disgraceful expedients. Then it was, that magistrates and senators began to pay their court to barbarian kings; to transport the arts of intrigue and of adroit flattery into the camps of Gothic or Frankic warriors, whom they regarded as their inferiors, but feared as the arbiters of their fortune. Then it was, above all, that the doctrine of the divine right of kings, of the criminality of all resistance on the part of the people, gained currency and credit in all ranks of society. The prelates, still full of gratitude for the support afforded them by Theodosius, taught that the power of God and of his ministers could alone set bounds to the power of kings. If, however, there is a great lesson to be gathered from the degrading revolutions of the empire, it is, that absolute power is fatal to him who wields, and to him who is subject to it. We have seen, we are about again to see, sovereigns, who, on the whole, do not deserve to be called wicked, afflict mankind with calamities surpassing those which have been most continually held up to our terror and aversion, as the offspring of the stormy passions of the people.

The utter corruption into which the Romans fell, during the fourth century, may also teach us this truth,—that adversity may be more fatal to the virtue of a nation than prosperity. Doubtless the period of the irruption of the Allemans into Gaul, of the Caledonians into Britain, of the Moors into Africa, of the Sarmatians into Pannonia, and of the Goths into the whole province of Illyricum, was not that in which mankind was lulled to slumber in the lap of ease and pleasure. But one effect of the long duration of states, and of their extended power, is, to separate the inhabitants into two classes, between whom the distance is constantly widening, and gradually to destroy the intermediate class, together with which all the social virtues are gradually uprooted and annihilated. From the time that this gulf is once opened between the two extremes of society, every successive revolution does but contribute to widen it: the progress of wealth had been favourable to the rich, the progress of distress favours them still more. The middle class had been unable to stand the competition with them during prosperity; in adverse times it is crushed under those calamities which only the very wealthy can stand against. The corruption of Rome had begun from the

time of the republic, from the time that the middle class ceased to impress its own peculiar character on the whole nation; this corruption increased in proportion as the intermediate ranks disappeared; it was carried to its highest pitch when the whole empire consisted of men of enormous wealth, and populace.

It is, in fact, in the middle classes that the domestic virtues,—economy, forethought, and the spirit of association,—mainly reside. It is in them that a certain degree of energy is incessantly called into operation, either as a means of rising, or of keeping the position already acquired. It is in them alone that the sentiment of social equality, on which all justice is based, can be kept alive. We must see our equals, live with them, meet them daily and hourly, encounter their interests and their passions, before we can get the habit of seeking our own advantage in the common weal alone. Grandeur isolates a man; vast opulence accustoms each individual to look upon himself as a distinct power. He feels that he can exist independently of his country; that his elevation, or his fall, may be distinct: and, ere long, the servile dependants, by whom a man who spends as much as a petty state is sure to be surrounded, succeed in persuading him that his pleasures, his pains, nay, his slightest caprices, are more important than the welfare of the thousands of families whose means of subsistence he engrosses.

The morality of a nation is preserved by associating its sentiments with all that is stable and permanent: it is destroyed by whatever tends to concentrate them on the present moment. So long as our recollections are dear to us, we shall take care that our hopes be worthy of them; but a people who sacrifice the memory of their ancestors, or the welfare of their children, to the pleasures of a day, are but sojourners in a country,—they are not citizens. In the Roman empire, at the time of the great Theodosius, the only two remaining classes of society were equally ashamed of the past, equally afraid of the future, equally driven to drown all reflection in the present. At the bottom of the social scale, the populace, recently emerged from slavery, or ready to sink into it again, lived on the public distributions of provisions, or on a daily largess, beyond which they saw nothing. Without hope for the future, these men had nothing to lose but their lives; and even these they were not permitted to ensure to themselves the power of defending. What remained for them, but to render themselves brutishly reckless of calamities they had

no means of averting, and which, whenever they did come, would bring with them the final insensibility to all suffering? At the other extremity of the scale, the senators were nurtured in the same indifference. Their possessions were almost invariably situated in remote provinces: he who learned that his harvests in Gaul had been burned, could still reckon on his granaries in Spain or Africa; he who could not protect his Thracian fields from the ravages of the Goth, calculated that his Syrian olive grounds, at least, were safe from the incursions of the Persian. However severe the losses they sustained, they scarcely ever amounted to ruin. They sometimes made him renounce marriage, (and indeed, all the illustrious families of Rome were rapidly becoming extinct,) but never did they cause him to change his luxurious habits. The princes of Poland reposed on a security similar in nature, though on a far less extended scale, previous to the first partition of that unhappy country. The frightful ravages of the Zaporove Cosacks did not, indeed, ruin a descendant of the Jagellons; but, with him, the security of fortune, united to the sentiment of patriotism, constituted a motive to dare every thing; with the Roman senator, the same security, joined with selfishness, furnished merely a reason for not fearing the worst. Improvidence, and an unbridled appetite for pleasure, equally characterizing the highest and the lowest class, are visible in every page of the Roman history of this period. We find a singular instance of it in the massacre of Thessalonica. Thessalonica was the capital of that great Illyrian prefecture, which, for years, had been subject to the horrible ravages of the Goths. Peace, it is true, had prevailed for eight years; but the Gothic army and nation had remained masters of the country. Not four years, moreover, had elapsed since a fresh invasion, that of the Gruthungians, had struck terror into the whole province. It was under these circumstances that the people of this great city, which had never resisted either foreign conquest or domestic tyranny, revolted on account of a charioteer of the circus, and massacred the lieutenant, the officers, and soldiers, of their emperor. Nay, so universal was the rage for these spectacles, that, after having irritated a monarch whose terrible violence was well known, the crowd, childish as ferocious, rushed again, with blind unsuspecting eagerness, to the circus, and expected games when vengeance awaited it. The same tastes pervaded all the capitals; the same fury for scenic games, the only one of all their public

passions which the Romans retained to the last. Distributions of bread among the mob often exempted them from all necessity for labour; and, as they knew no other luxury, as they desired no other enjoyment, life, surrounded by public misery, was consumed in base and brutal pleasures.

The succession of the two sons of Theodosius, between whom the empire was divided, (Jan. 17, 395,) was not an event of a character to rouse the Roman world from its lethargy. Two children, who never became men, were heirs to the inheritance of a hero. Arcadius, whose portion was the East, was eighteen; Honorius was only eleven. The former reigned thirteen years, (A. D. 395—408,) the latter twenty-eight. (A. D. 395—423.) It was never possible to discern the moment at which either arrived at the age of reason. But the imbecility of the elder was more immediately felt by the empire, because it was impossible not to pay some deference to his will and to his taste; and the court, modelled on the nullity of its master, was, from his very accession, the scene of base intrigues, of feebleness, and of fraud; whereas the infancy of the younger left the first place in the state for thirteen years in the occupation of him who was most worthy of it—the great Stilicho. (A. D. 395—408.)

Theodosius had intrusted his two sons to his two ablest ministers; he had hoped they would second each other, and that the unity of the empire would be preserved under the sway of two old colleagues, guiding two minor brothers. On the contrary, the first feeling displayed by these ministers was one of jealousy; the rancour of the weaker against the stronger mind sought an ally in popular prejudice. The East, whose language was Greek, was incited to distrust the West, where Latin prevailed. Difference of manners was blended with difference of language: two nations were set in opposition to each other; the unity of the Roman empire was broken; and two empires, that of the East and that of the West, were taught to think that they had nothing in common.

Rufinus, an able Gallic jurisconsult, whom Theodosius had raised to the rank of prefect of the East, was charged with the direction of the counsels of Arcadius and of the court of Constantinople. He had long been accused of avarice and cruelty; his vices had, however, been controlled by the eye of the master: as soon as he felt himself without a superior, they broke forth without restraint. He already thought his fortune secured, beyond

all chance of a reverse, by a marriage between his only daughter and his sovereign. Arcadius appeared to acquiesce. The day was fixed for the ceremony: the pompous nuptial train was on its way to the palace of the prefect, to fetch the new empress. But, in passing before the house of the beautiful Eudoxia, Arcadius suddenly stopped, declared that she was the bride he had chosen, and took her home to the palace, instead of the daughter of the prefect. It was, however, from no project originating in his own breast, from no passion which led him to disregard all other considerations, that the monarch of the East was induced thus to dupe his prime minister. He was but the tool of a court intrigue, conducted by the eunuch Eutropius: in this instance, as in every succeeding one of his reign, he yielded to the insinuations of his servants,—the only portion of his subjects whom he ever knew. Shortly after, Rufinus was murdered at his master's feet, (Nov. 27, 395,) by order of the Goth Gainas, who had led the legions of Theodosius back from the West; and Arcadius, a stranger to all the duties and functions of empire, abandoned the reins of government to the vile favourites whom fraud or violence alternately raised to the domination of the palace.

Stilicho, a soldier of fortune, who is believed to have been the son of a Vandal, and who, under the reign of Theodosius, had already evinced great talents for war, was at the head of the army of the West at the moment of the emperor's death, and remained sole guardian of Honorius. Stilicho is the hero of Claudian, the last of the great poets of Rome: his poem is almost the only document of the history of the guardian of Honorius. We can gather but an indistinct conception of him from this sort of testimony, unsupported by that of historians; we have no materials for forming an opinion of the character of a great man, but the writing of his panegyrist, or of the calumniators whom we know to have been paid by the emperor. Yet, even from representations so contradictory and so doubtful, we gather enough to see in Stilicho a great and awful shade, worthy of that empire whose ruins he defended. His military genius secured him victories, though he no longer found Roman soldiers to command; he showed not only courage, but self-devotion, on behalf of a country which was already but a name; and, to crown all, he tried to interest in the national defence, the Roman senate, the men of high rank, the deputies of provinces: but he found in them only unmeaning declamation, and a pompous display of affected sentiment, in the place of patriotism.

This Western empire, which Stilicho was called to defend in the moment of its extremest danger, was now little more than a vast desert, where no soldiers were to be found, where the regular operation of the laws was suspended, and where only two authorities were recognised,—that of a territorial aristocracy invested with no legal power, but beyond the reach of law; and that of a fanatical clergy, which swayed the multitude at its pleasure.

Italy and Gaul had still officers nominated by the emperor, and municipal magistrates elected by the cities; but both were alike impotent to carry the execution of the laws into the vast domains of a senator, who was the proprietor of entire provinces.

Africa, the five provinces of which extended over thirty degrees of longitude, or more than six hundred leagues along the Mediterranean coast, had fallen entirely into the hands of the children of the Moor Nabal, its wealthiest proprietor. The slaves of this family, its creatures, its clients, gave it a power against which the emperor himself could not contend. Firmus, whose revolt we have noticed in another place, was one of these children, after him came Gildo his brother, who from 386 to 398, formed to himself almost an independent sovereignty of this vast region. When, at length, Stilicho tried to reduce him to obedience, he destined an army of five thousand men to conquer a country, at least twice as large as France; nor was this all; he thought himself unable to attempt the enterprise without allying the animosity of a personal enemy to the imperial power. Mascezel had been robbed of his inheritance by his brother Gildo, who had also massacred his children: he cherished all a Moor's thirst for revenge against his brother. It was for him that the conquest of Africa was reserved. He made a descent upon it in 398, with the five thousand soldiers which had been given him to combat his brother; and after he had avenged himself, his unexpected death in crossing a bridge, over which his horse threw him, put an end to this patrimonial power, which had its source neither in the choice of the monarch nor in that of the people. On another occasion, we learn from the disasters of the reign of Honorius, that the brothers of Theodosius, as the richest proprietors of Lusitania, exercised a power in Spain as great as that Gildo had possessed in Africa.

The reign of the sons of Theodosius was fatally marked by the settlement of the barbarians in the West. On the one hand, the

Visigoths, setting out from what is called Servia, after ravaging Greece and then Italy, obtained a fixed abode at the foot of the Pyrennees, and there founded the monarchy, which was soon extended over the whole of Spain. On the other, the Germans crossed the Rhine, and, spreading over Gaul and Spain, founded the monarchies of the Burgundians, the Suevi, the Lusitanians, and the Vandals of Bætica. The acts of this great drama must be exhibited in their order. We are called upon alternately to watch the march of history, and to reason upon its results: we implore the indulgence of our readers for the dry detail of facts with which we are compelled occasionally to burden their memories.

Sufficient time had already elapsed for the Visigoths, established in Mœsia from the year 382, to recover from the evils of a war, in which they had lost their ancient country and conquered a new one; for a nation in the vigour of youth rapidly recruits its strength during repose: while the empire in its decrepitude was gradually becoming feebler by the mere lapse of time. The young men longed to rival their fathers in feats of arms; and, though solicited to enter the service of Arcadius, they despised military rewards which were not awarded by bravery, and could not endure to see the valour of the soldiers dishonoured by the cowardice of the leaders, or the fortune of adventurers dependent on the favour of courts. Alaric, a prince of the royal house of the Balthi, had, like the rest of his countrymen, made his first campaigns in the armies of the emperor, but when he had subsequently demanded promotion proportionate to the rank he held in his own nation, or to the ability he had displayed in the service of Rome, he received an insulting refusal. He soon taught the feeble son of Theodosius what an enemy he had thus imprudently made: the Visigoths, whose warlike passions he had aroused, raised him on a shield, saluted him as king, and called upon him to lead them on to those rich provinces, in which glory, wealth, and all the enjoyments it procures, would be the prize of their valour. As soon as Alaric announced that he was about to attack the empire, numerous hordes of Scythians marched across the frozen Danube and joined his standard: at the beginning of the year 396, a formidable host, whose progress no line of fortifications could arrest, advanced as far as Constantinople, laying waste the whole country in its line of march.

Till then, Greece had escaped the invasion of barbarians, which

rarely extended south of Constantinople; but Alaric held out to his soldiers the hope of dividing the yet untouched spoil of those illustrious regions. The defiles of Thermopylæ, at the foot of Mount Cæta, were abandoned to him by the cowardice of the soldiers: during a long peace, all the fortifications of the cities of Achaia had fallen into decay; and the Visigoths now penetrated into the sanctuary of ancient civilization. (A. D. 396.) He granted a capitulation to Athens; but he gave up the whole of the rest of this country, enriched with the glory and the beauty of former ages, and hallowed by the memory of the highest moral and intellectual culture which human nature ever attained, to the fury and rapacity of a savage soldiery: then it was that the temple of Ceres Eleusis was pillaged, and the mysteries which had been celebrated there for eighteen centuries were interrupted.

Then, too, began the memorable struggle between the skilful tactics of Stilicho and the headlong courage of Alaric. The former, who had passed the Adriatic with the legions of Italy, knew that his soldiers would never withstand the valour of the Goths: he consequently employed all his art in enticing them into a district of mountain gorges, in which he hemmed them up by a war of posts, always avoiding a battle, and thus, as it were, besieging them on a mountain, and there reducing them by hunger. Such was the address Stilicho displayed on several occasions, not only against Alaric, but other barbarian generals: but in the campaign of Greece his measures were defeated by those upon whose assistance he might reasonably have calculated. The base courtiers of Constantinople were more afraid of the influence a great man might acquire over their monarch by a signal service, than of the sword of the enemy which hung over their heads: they prevailed on Arcadius to command the general of the West to evacuate his empire; at the same time the emperor demanded peace of Alaric, and purchased it by appointing him master-general of the infantry in eastern Illyricum.

The vices inherent in despotic government had gradually dried up all the resources of the empire; but in these last calamities it was more especially the immediate act of the sovereign which brought the most dreadful evils upon his people. When Arcadius, instigated by the basest jealousy, granted to his most dangerous foe the command of the province he had just laid waste, he placed at his disposal the four great arsenals of the Illyrian prefecture, at Margus, Ratiaria, Naissus, and Thessalonica. For four years,

the most skilful armorers of the empire were employed in the workshops of these four towns in forging arms for the Goths. For four years, Alaric was industriously training his soldiers according to Roman discipline, and to the use of arms so superior to those they had been accustomed to bear; and when, with the aid of the Greeks, he had rendered his subjects far more formidable than they could ever have become without these advantages, he called upon them to show the Romans what use they could make of the lessons they had received from other subjects of the empire. In the autumn of the year 402, he traversed the Julian Alps and entered Italy by the Frioul (forum Julii.)

Even were the campaigns of these two great captains, Alaric and Stilicho, known to us sufficiently in detail to throw any light on the art of war, this would not be the place to follow them out; still less would it profit us to pause over the scenes of suffering and of misery in which that history is but too abundant. One thing alone deserves our attention: the new proofs which every step brings to view of the exhaustion, the death-like state, of an empire, which still numbered among its members Italy, Spain, France, England, Belgium, Africa, and the half of Germany,—an empire still governed by a great warrior and statesman, yet who, with all his genius, could not impart any vigour to the worn-out frame. Stilicho was, in fact, the real monarch of the West. Honorius, who had attained the age of eighteen, fixed his residence at Milan. His chief pleasure was to breed chickens in the palace, which knew his voice and fed from his hand. There was certainly no harm in this. It was a very innocent pleasure, and in no respect interfered with the administration of the empire. That nothing might interfere with that of his poultry-yard, his courtiers had been careful never to pronounce the name of Alaric in his ears, nor to permit any signs of the danger which menaced him, to appear before him, up to the very moment when the king of the Goths had reached the Adige. On the news of the enemy's approach, the emperor's first and only thought was to save his person.

Stilicho, who feared the panic that the flight of the youthful sovereign would spread throughout Italy, with extreme difficulty withheld him, by a promise that he would return very shortly with an army powerful enough to defend him. The winter, during which the Goths had gone into quarters in the neighbourhood of Treviso, gave him a little time to recruit his army. But soldiers

were not to be found in Italy; Stilicho was obliged to fetch them from Gaul, and even from Britain. He abandoned to the good faith of barbarians both the banks of the Rhine and the Caledonian wall. He incorporated into his army all the ancient enemies of Rome who were willing to enlist under his banner, and with 40,000 or 50,000 men he recrossed the Alps, in the spring of 403. Alaric, who had crossed the Adige, pursued Honorius, and was already besieging him in Asti, when Stilicho marched to the emperor's relief; compelled the haughty king of the Goths to raise the siege; and took advantage of his devotion to attack him at Pollentia, during the solemnity of Easter. He defeated him in a bloody engagement on the 29th of March, 403; stopped him as he attempted to cross the Apennines and to lay waste southern Italy; forced him to retreat towards the Alps, and there beat him again in the neighbourhood of Verona; and, after all these victories, thought himself happy when the terrible Alaric evacuated Italy, and retired into Pannonia.

Honorius claimed the honours of a triumph in celebration of Stilicho's victories; and this solemnity of ancient Rome was, for the last time, stained with the bloody combats of gladiators. They were soon after abolished for ever, by an edict of Honorius. But that emperor, who had visited Rome with great pomp, (A. D. 404;) who, in compliance with the counsels of Stilicho, had paid the senate and the people a deference they had long been unaccustomed to receive from the masters of the world; had not sufficient reliance on the victories he was thus celebrating, to dare to fix his abode either in the ancient capital or in the metropolis of Lombardy. His first care was to seek in his states a city secure from the attacks of all his enemies. He made choice of Ravenna. This city, originally built on piles, intersected with canals, surrounded with marshes, presented the appearance we now see in Venice, and was no less inaccessible to attack from the land. Scarcely had he retired thither, when the West was alarmed by the march of Radogast, and by the great and final invasion of the barbarians, who, from that time, never more evacuated the empire.

The general agitation of Germany has been attributed, by some writers, to new movements among the Scythian tribes, to the victories of Touloun, Khan of the Georgians, over the Huns. (A. D. 400.) It appears to us more probable, that the last inva-

sion of the Western empire is to be traced to causes residing in the Germans themselves. Already had several generations of their young warriors successively left their native woods to seek glory and spoil within the boundaries of the empire: it was become a habit; the minds of men were turned in that direction. Each successive expedition more clearly revealed the feebleness of the adversaries the Germans hoped to plunder; and when they saw the Goths establish themselves south of the Danube, ravage Italy and Greece, and threaten the ancient capital of the world, they feared, perhaps, that Alaric would leave them nothing to take. Radogast, king of one of the nations which inhabited the southern shores of the Baltic, (the country now called Mecklenburg,) declared that he had made a vow never to return his sword to its scabbard till he had levelled the walls of Rome, and divided its treasures among his soldiers. A host of warriors, nay, whole nations, were eager to second him; so that it is difficult to ascertain which was the tribe more immediately subject to his orders. The Burgundians, the Vandals, the Silingi, the Gepidæ, the Suevi, and the Alans, took arms at the same time; more than 200,000 warriors flocked from all parts of Germany, and composed these great armies. In many provinces they were accompanied by their women and children, and the country they left behind them was a desert.

Stilicho had been unable to send the legions he had summoned from the frontiers of the empire, to repulse Alaric, back to their original stations. He detained them under his command in Italy; but the whole military force of this gigantic monarchy scarcely exceeded 35,000 men,—so great had been the loss of soldiers in the late wars, and so great the difficulty of recruiting. The Lower Danube was abandoned to the Goths, the Upper Danube was exposed; the Upper Rhine was confided to the doubtful faith of the Allemans, and the Lower to that of the Franks. Radogast entered Pannonia, without difficulty, at the head of one of the great armies, (A. D. 406;) nor did he experience any resistance on his passage of the Alps, or of the Po, or even of the Apennines. The trembling Honorius shut himself up in Ravenna. Stilicho could hardly collect his soldiers at Pavia. At length he marched in pursuit of Radogast, came up with him near Florence, and, with the same ability with which he had twice attacked and defeated Alaric, drove him back from post to post, shut him up within his fortifications, without ever giving

him an opportunity of fighting a battle, and, at length, besieged him on the arid heights of Fiesole, where, after losing the greater part of his army by hunger, thirst, and disease, he was compelled to surrender at discretion. The vanquished foe, who trusted to the generosity of Honorius, had small ground for hope. The emperor put to death the captive before whom he had trembled.

But the defeat of Radogast did not deliver the empire. Two other armies advanced upon Gaul. One, led on by Gondemar, king of the Burgundians, crossed the Upper Rhine, bore along the Allemans with him, and devastated the whole of eastern Gaul. The other, commanded by Godegisela, king of the Vandals, marched to the Lower Rhine; they encountered the Franks, who opposed a vigorous resistance: but, after an obstinate combat, during which the Alans came up to the succour of the Vandals, just as they were giving way before the enemy, the passage of the Rhine was effected on the 31st of December, 406, and the whole torrent of the barbarous tribes of Germany poured at once, with equal fury, over every part of Gaul. During three whole years massacre, pillage, fire, spread from province to province; while the wretched inhabitants were unable to offer any resistance; while the government made not an effort to defend them; while the conquerors wearied not in their savage work. But as, in their first blind fury, they had destroyed treasures which they now vainly regretted, and had burned storehouses, which would have preserved them from the famine which now threatened them, the remaining spoil was insufficient to satisfy their cupidity. On the 13th of October, 409, a body of Suevi, Vandals, and Alans forced the passes of the Pyrennees, and Spain shared the fate of Gaul. At length, these hordes began to feel the need of repose. They fixed their quarters in the provinces they had conquered, in such a manner that each sovereign army could exercise a systematic oppression over the provincials, who were no longer treated as enemies, but as slaves. About the year 410, Spain was portioned out among its Germanic conquerors: the Suevi and the Vandals shared the ancient Galicia; the Alans had Lusitania; the Silingi, Boetica; whilst in Gaul, the Burgundians advanced from the Moselle to the Rhone; the Allemans established themselves in Eastern Helvetia; and the Franks extended their quarters into Belgium. Nevertheless, the Germans made no immediate allotment or distribution of lands: they did not choose to become citizens at the expense of ceasing to be soldiers.

It may appear matter of astonishment that the great Stilicho did nothing for the defence of the empire: but his power had already been shaken by court intrigues. From the time of his flight from Milan, Honorius had begun to think himself a great captain; and his confidence in his own military talents had been raised by the triumph he had decreed himself. He deemed himself of an age to govern alone; and his first essay in the art of government was to thwart all the operations of his general. A vile favourite, whom he had taken from the situation of illuminator of the palace to place him near his person, had found means to rouse his pride. He continually repeated to him, that people were astonished that, at twenty-five, the emperor should not be his own master. From the time the courtiers remarked the decline of Stilicho's influence, they industriously accumulated obstacles in his way. This illustrious man, worthy of a better age, had tried to restore the dignity of the senate, and to rouse its members to fresh interest in the affairs of the republic. But he had found only rhetors, far more intent on catching popularity by making a display of fine sentiments, or by aping the expressions of their forefathers, than on understanding the state of affairs, their means of defence, or their resources. He had been forced to strive for a long time before he could bring them to sign a treaty with Alaric, which was become absolutely necessary, but which they pronounced unworthy the ancient majesty of Rome. Stilicho had been no less indefatigable in his efforts to raise the courage of the army, and to restore its discipline; but experience had taught him, that it was vain to look for intrepidity, for constancy under privation, for strength to support fatigue, except among his barbarian auxiliaries. The favours he granted, the politic means by which he endeavoured to recruit the ranks of the defenders of Rome from among her enemies, caused discontent among the soldiers who called themselves Romans. Honorius, and his favourite Olympius, strove to heighten the animosity, and to imbitter the accusations against Stilicho. The former, seized the moment of his general's absence to review his army at Pavia, and addressed them in a speech calculated to exasperate them against their chief. His aim was, to incite his soldiers to demand the dismissal of a man whom he accused of having abused his confidence. But the sedition he excited, burst out with a violence he had not calculated on. The soldiers massacred two prætonian prefects, two masters-general

of cavalry and infantry, and almost all their generals and officers, because they had been appointed by Stilicho. Honorius, with trembling haste, published a decree, in which he condemned the memory of the dead, and applauded the conduct and fidelity of the insurgent troops. The moment this news was carried to the camp of the confederate army at Bologna, where Stilicho then was, the leaders of the barbarian soldiers, with one accord, offered to defend, to avenge him, and even to seat him upon the throne. He would not expose the empire to the horrors of civil war for his own security or advantage. He refused their offers: he even warned the Roman cities to be on their guard against the confederate troops; and, proceeding straight to Ravenna, seated himself at the foot of the altar of the great church, thus invoking the protection of superstition in default of that he had a right to claim from gratitude. But he could not avert the fate by which greatness in a subject is generally rewarded by baseness on a throne. The count Heradius, who was sent by the emperor to arrest the noble soldier, would have been withheld by scruples from violating the sanctuary: he had none in deceiving the bishop of Ravenna by a false oath. Having thus induced him to deliver up Stilicho into his hands, he struck off his head with his own sword before the porch of the church, (August 23d, 408.)

Stilicho had too much greatness of soul not to appreciate that quality in others: he honoured his adversary Alaric; he knew what he had to fear from him, and he had employed his utmost policy to keep at peace with him during the invasion of Radogast. The mean and cowardly Honorius, on the contrary, who was beyond the reach of danger in his retreat at Ravenna, thought that a display of arrogance was a proof of strength, and that to insult an enemy, was to intimidate him. He displaced the bravest and most renowned barbarian captains from the commands they held in his armies; removed all who professed religious opinions different from his own, from every public office; thus depriving himself and the state of the services of a great many distinguished pagan or Arian functionaries: and, to complete the purification of his army, ordered a general massacre of all the women and children of the barbarians, whom the soldiers in his service had delivered up as hostages. In one day and hour these innocent victims were given up to slaughter, and their property to pillage.

These hostages had been left in all the Italian cities by the barbarian confederates, as a guarantee for their fidelity to Rome; when they learned that the whole had perished, in the midst of peace, in contempt of all oaths, one furious and terrific cry of vengeance arose, and thirty thousand soldiers, who had been the faithful servants of the empire, at once passed over to the camp of Alaric, and urged him to lead them on to Rome.

Alaric, in language the moderation of which Honorius and his ministers ascribed to fear, demanded reparation for the insults offered him, and strict observance of the treaties concluded with him. The only answer he obtained was couched in terms of fresh insult, and contained an order to evacuate all the provinces of the empire. It might have been supposed that great armies were ready to support such insolent pretensions; yet, when Alaric crossed the Alps, in the month of October, 408, he traversed Friuli, the towns of Aquilea, Concordia, Altino, and Cremona, and came up before the walls of Ravenna without meeting a single foe. He had no hope of reducing that city by siege; but no one attempted to arrest his march across Romagna when he continued his route; and he at length arrived before Rome 619 years after that city had been threatened by Hannibal. During that long interval her citizens had never looked down from her walls upon the banner of an enemy waving in their plains.

But this long term of peace and prosperity had added nothing to their means of defence; in vain did they count 1780 senatorial houses, or palaces enriched with every luxury; in vain did they boast that the revenue of more than one of their senators exceeded 4000 pounds weight of gold,—160,000*l.* sterling, (for it is well to compare this enormous wealth with that of the country which approaches the most nearly to it;) all their opulence, all their splendour, were insufficient to procure them the defence of brave soldiers. The people had long been regarded with distrust;—the people, whom the general organization of society rendered miserable, and who cared for nothing but public distributions of bread, meat, and oil. The mob, who had for generations been withheld from the use of arms, and whom the higher classes would have trembled to see brought into military training, was devoid of strength and of courage when the enemy appeared without the walls. Alaric did not attempt to take Rome by assault: he blockaded the gates, stopped the navigation of the Tiber, and soon famine took possession of a city which was eighteen

miles in circumference, and contained above a million of inhabitants. The Romans were reduced to feed on the vilest and most revolting aliments: we are assured, that these men, who dared not fight, dared to cover their tables with human flesh, nay, even the flesh of their children. That no supernatural aid might be neglected, not only did they first invoke all the celestial powers, by means of the ceremonies of the church, but, on the 1st of March, 409, they had recourse to the gods of paganism, and to the infernal spirits with whom those gods had been confounded; these they strove to propitiate by forbidden sacrifices. Honorius ceased not to promise succours, which it was not in his power to grant, and which, indeed, he did not so much as attempt to collect; this deluded expectation cost the besieged thousands of lives. At length, the Romans had recourse to the clemency of Alaric; and, by means of a ransom of five thousand pounds of gold and a great quantity of precious effects, the army was induced to retire into Tuscany.

But it seemed as if Honorius had determined on the destruction of Rome, which the barbarians consented to spare; new favourites supplanted each other in rapid succession in the favour of the monarch, and in the possession of supreme power. A certain road was open to them;—to flatter his pride, to boast his resources, to repel every idea of concession to the enemies of the state; while Alaric, in the heart of Italy, re-enforced by forty thousand slaves of Germanic extraction, who had fled from Rome, still more powerfully re-enforced by the valiant Ataulphus, his brother-in-law, who had led a fresh army from the shores of the Danube, asked only a province in which to establish his nation in peace. Honorius successively broke off every negotiation begun by his own orders; obstinately refused what he had already promised, and, at length, exacted a solemn oath from all the officers of the army, who swore on the head of the emperor, that never, and under no circumstances, would they lend an ear to any treaty with the public enemy.

Notwithstanding the thousand provocations he received from the imbecile and imprudent Honorius, Alaric had the generosity to spare the capital of the world, for which he felt an involuntary reverence. But, taking possession of the mouth of the Tiber, and the city of Porto, which contained the chief granaries, he sent word to the senate, that, if they wished to save Rome from famine, they must choose a new emperor. The senate made

choice of Attalus, a prætorian prefect, who made peace with Alaric, and named him general of all the armies of the empire. But the new emperor was neither less incapable, nor less presumptuous than Honorius: he would not follow the advice of Alaric; he neglected to cause himself to be recognised in Africa: in a word, he committed so many faults, that, after allowing him to wield the sovereign power for a year, Alaric was compelled to depose him. He again offered peace to Honorius; was again repulsed with insult, and then, for the third time, led back his army to the gates of Rome; and, on the 24th of April, 410, the year 1163 from the foundation of the august city, the Salarian gate was opened to him in the night, and the capital of the world, the queen of nations, was abandoned to the fury of the Goths.

Yet this fury was not without some tinge of pity; Alaric granted a peculiar protection to the churches, which were preserved from all insult, together with their sacred treasures, and all those who had sought refuge within their walls.

While he abandoned the property of the Romans to pillage, he took their lives under his protection; and it is affirmed, that only a single senator perished by the sword of the barbarians. The number of plebeians who were sacrificed appears not to have been thought a matter of sufficient importance even to be mentioned. At the entrance of the Goths, a small part of the city was given up to the flames; but Alaric soon took precautions for the preservation of the rest of the edifices. Above all, he had the generosity to withdraw his army from Rome on the sixth day, and to march it into Campania, loaded, however, with an immense booty. Eleven centuries later, the army of the Constable de Bourbon showed less moderation.

A religious veneration for the city which had vanquished the world, for the capital of civilization, seemed to have protected Rome against her most puissant enemy. Yet, it might soon have been imagined that even this generous foe was punished for daring first to lay a sacrilegious hand on her majesty; for, at the end of a few months, Alaric fell ill and died, in the full career of victory, and full of the projected conquest of Sicily and Africa. Alaric was buried in the bed of the Bisentium, a little river which flows beneath the walls of Cozenza; and the captives who had been employed to dig his grave, to turn the course of the river, and afterwards lead it into its former bed, were all

massacred, that none might be able to reveal the spot where reposed the body of the conqueror of Rome.

In fact, the Goths, always wandering, could not protect the graves of their illustrious men. They thought with pain that, at their death, they would leave their bones entombed in hostile ground, and that the dastardly inhabitants, who never dared to meet them face to face, would revenge themselves on their remains, for the terror they had inspired. Satisfied with uninterrupted conquest, and gorged with spoil, they once more demanded a country and a home; and Ataulphus, brother-in-law of Alaric, whom they raised on their shields and proclaimed king, seconded their wishes, and renewed those negotiations with the court of Ravenna, which Alaric had been unable to bring to a conclusion. The terror caused by the sack of Rome had at length shaken even the stubborn pride of the emperor: his ministers, liberated from their oath by the death of Alaric, eagerly represented to him that, in adopting the Gothic king's army as soldiers of the republic, he would augment his power, and would avenge himself of his enemies; that Ataulphus appeared disposed to rid Gaul of the barbarians, in consideration of obtaining a small part of the deserts of that province; that he offered to render a still more important service in warring against the usurpers who had dared to assume the purple;—foes infinitely more dangerous and more criminal than the public enemy, since they assailed the majesty of the emperor himself, whilst the others directed their hostilities against the common and ignoble herd of subjects. A treaty was actually concluded, by which Ataulphus and the Visigothic nation engaged to combat the enemies of Honorius in Gaul and Spain; in consideration of which, the latter should cede to them the provinces of Aquitania and Narbonnese Gaul, in which they were to establish themselves, and to found a new Gothland, an independent people. In 412, Ataulphus marched back his army and his nation from the extremity of Campania into southern Gaul: the cities of Narbonne, Toulouse, and Bordeaux were open to them; and the Visigoths at length hailed with joy the land in which they were at length to find a resting-place and a home.

Ataulphus, the first of the Visigoths who had led his countrymen into southern Gaul and Spain, appears to have had another motive for his reconciliation with the Romans, which belongs rather to romance than to history. Among the captives carried off

from Rome, and compelled to follow the camp of the Visigoths, was Placidia, the sister of Honorius, who was very superior to either of her brothers in talents and in ambition. Ataulphus fell in love with her, and regarded an alliance with the daughter of the great Theodosius, and the sister of the two reigning emperors, as a new glory to himself. Among the Romans, the reigning family was not distinct from all others, as among the Germanic tribes; the title of princess was unknown; and Placidia had no other alternative than celibacy, or a union with one of her brother's subjects; yet such an alliance still appeared, to a Roman, far superior to one with a barbaric king. An invincible prejudice had hitherto severed the Romans from all other nations; and the first proposals for this marriage, addressed to the court of Honorius, were regarded as an insult. Placidia thought otherwise; she beheld Ataulphus, whose noble countenance seemed formed to efface the ancient prejudices of Rome. Before the Goths quitted Italy, she married their leader and sovereign at Forli; but the royal nuptials were celebrated anew with greater splendour at Narbonne, the capital of the new kingdom won by Gothic valour. "A hall was decorated after the Roman fashion," says Olympiodorus, a contemporary historian, "in the house of Ingenuus, one of the first citizens of the town: the place of honour was reserved for Placidia, while Ataulphus, clad in a Roman toga, seated himself at her side: fifty beautiful youths, attired in silken garments, whom he destined as a gift to his bride, then advanced, each presenting to her two cups, the one filled with gold, the other with gems,—a part of the spoil of Rome. At the same time Attalus, that Attalus whom Alaric had created emperor, appeared and sang the epithalamium."

Thus did the calamities of the world furnish trophies to decorate the festivals of its masters.

CHAPTER VII.

The Barbarians established in the Empire.—State of Britain, and of Armorica.—Settlements of the Franks on the Rhine, the Burgundians on the Rhone, the Visigoths on the Loire.—Mixed Governments; Roman Prefects, Barbarian Kings and Assemblies.—State of Spain, of Italy, of Pannonia, and of Africa.—Universal Suffering.—Deaths of Arcadius and Honorius.—Dynasties of the barbaric Kings.—Frequency of atrocious Crimes.—Fabulous Account of Frankic Kings.—Visigoths, Suevi, Alans, Vandals.—Conquest of Africa by the Vandals under Genseric.—Their Ferocity.—Fall of Carthage.—Kingdom of the Huns.—Attila.—His Treaty with Theodosius II.—His Northern Conquests.—His Attack on the Empire.—Submission of the Greeks.—Embassy to his Camp.—Passage of the Rhine.—Defeat of Attila by Ætius at Chalons.—Invasion of Italy by Attila.—Foundation of Venice.—Death of Attila.—Dissolution of his Empire.—A. D. 412—453.

FROM the time the barbarians had established themselves in all parts of the empire, this vast portion of the world, heretofore subject to the levelling influence of a despotism which had broken down all distinctions and all differences, now presented the wildest assemblage of dissimilar manners, opinions, languages, religions, and governments. Spite of the habits of servility which were hereditary among the subjects of the empire, their subordination was broken up; the law no longer reached them; oppression or protection no longer emanated from Rome or from Constantinople. The supreme power, in its impotence, had called upon them to govern themselves; and ancient national manners, ancient local opinions, began to reappear under the borrowed garb of Rome. But this strange motley of provincialism was nothing compared to that introduced by the barbarians who had pitched their camps in the midst of Roman cities, and whose kings were constantly intermingled with senators and with bishops.

At one extremity of the Roman dominions, the island of Britain escaped from the power which had civilized but enervated it. Stilicho had withdrawn the legions from it for the defence of Italy. The usurper Constantine, who had revolted against Honorius between the years 407 and 411, and who, after reducing Britain, had attempted the conquest of Gaul, led thither all the

soldiers who still remained in the island. After he was defeated, and his head sent to Ravenna, Honorius did not choose to deprive himself of any portion of his troops for the defence of so remote a province: he wrote to the cities of Britain as if they already formed an independent confederation, and exhorted them to provide for their own defence. Fourteen of these cities were considerable; several had already made great progress in arts and commerce, and, above all, in that Roman luxury which so rapidly tamed and deadened the fiercest courage. London was a large and flourishing town; but, among its numerous inhabitants, not one was found who dared to take up arms. Its municipal government, established on the Roman system, like those of York, Canterbury, Cambridge, &c., would have given them the advantages of a republican administration, if they had preserved a little more public spirit; but the poison of a foreign domination had sapped the vital energies of the country. It was in the country, and not in the towns, that we must look for the first symptoms of the revival of a national feeling. The Celtic language, which was almost extinct in Gaul, had been preserved in Britain,—a proof that the rural population was not utterly crushed. It seems that the rich proprietors, the British senators, were aware that their security and their power depended wholly on their union with the people; it is probable that they lived in the midst of their peasantry, and learned their language: at all events, we find them reappearing under British, and not under Roman names, in that struggle which they were soon called upon to sustain with the Picts and Scots, and, at a later period, with the Saxons.

The condition of Armorica, or Little Britain, was nearly similar, both in the nature of its population, which had likewise preserved the Celtic language and manners, and in its remoteness from the centre of the empire. The Armorican cities also formed a league which raised a sort of militia for their own defence, and inspired some respect up to the time of the Frankic invasion. The vigour of the fierce Osismians, who inhabited the farther coast of Britany; their courage, their agility, their attachment to their hereditary chieftains, recalled to the rest of the Gauls what their fathers had been. They resembled those mountaineers of Scotland whom a great poet has so admirably depicted, such as they remained scarcely more than half a century ago.

In spite of the prohibitory laws of Augustus and Claudius, many of them adhered to the primitive worship of the gods of the Druids; those atrocious divinities, whose altars were buried in the depths of forests, and stained with human blood. Others had embraced Christianity, and, during four centuries, they furnished a great number of saints to the church of Rome. So long as the British heroes, such as Hoel, Allan, Judicael, (to whom several churches were dedicated,) retained the vigour of youth or manhood, they knew no other passion than that for war; they poured down by night on the nearest Roman or Gaulish villages, which they pillaged and burned: but, when their ferocity was tamed by age and began to give place to the terrors of a future judgment, they shut themselves up in convents and lived a life of the severest penance.

The Franks had begun to cross over from the right to the left bank of the Rhine, and had made some settlements in Belgium; but, faithful to their alliance with the empire, which had made the greatest exertions and sacrifices to preserve their friendship, they every where appeared in the character of soldiers of the emperors; their numerous petty sovereigns solicited imperial dignities; their highest ambition was to rise at the court of the sons of Theodosius; and they had learned how to combine the arts of intrigue with valour. If they oppressed and despoiled the peasantry upon whom they were quartered; if, in a sudden burst of fury, or in a fit of rapacity, they fell upon large cities; if even Trèves, the capital of all the Gauls, and Cologne, the chief town of Lower Germany, were on several occasions pillaged by them, the emperors and their prefects were too sensible of the importance of their Frankic allies to cherish long resentment, and peace was soon concluded at the expense of the defenceless sufferers.

The Burgundians in eastern Gaul, the Visigoths in southern, also called themselves the soldiers of the emperors. Their condition was, however, very different from that of the Franks; the entire nation had transmigrated into a new abode, without acknowledging any fixed limits: it had extended its dominion wherever it could make its power feared. The king of the Burgundians sometimes held his court at Vienne, on the Rhone, sometimes at Lyons or Geneva; the kings of the Visigoths at Narbonne, at Bordeaux, or oftener at Toulouse: the city was subject to them, yet Roman magistrates still continued to regu-

late the police, and to administer justice according to Roman laws, and in favour of Roman subjects. The Visigoths and the Burgundians had appropriated lands either waste, or taken from the original proprietors without many formalities; these were abandoned to their flocks and herds, or occasionally cultivated by their slaves; but negligently and without any outlay which must await a tardy return. They chose to be ready to quit the fields they had sown, the next year, if needful. The two nations had not yet taken root in the soil. The Visigoths sometimes passed over from Aquitaine into Spain; the Burgundians from the banks of the Rhine to those of the Moselle. The habits of a wandering life, confirmed by half a century, could not be broken through at once; all the Visigoths were Christians, but of the Arian sect, as were also the Burgundians. The bishops hated heresy far more than paganism, and they sedulously nourished in their flocks an aversion which the violence of these arrogant guests was sufficient to excite, and which sometimes burst forth in formidable commotions. Nevertheless, the priests understood too well where the power of the sword lay, to dispute the authority of these barbaric kings as they had lately disputed that of the emperors. At Toulouse and at Vienne, they paid their court conjointly with the senators; the prelates, in all the pomp of their ecclesiastical ornaments, and the senators, still wearing the once awe-inspiring toga, mingled with the rude warriors whom they hated and despised, but whose favour they sought and gained by dexterous flattery.

The same form of civil administration still subsisted. A prætorian prefect still resided at Trèves; a vicar of the seventeen Gallic provinces at Arles: each of these provinces had its Roman duke; each of the hundred and fifteen cities of Gaul had its count; each city its curia, or municipality. But, collaterally with this Roman organization, the barbarians, assembled in their *mallum*, of which their kings were presidents, decided on peace and war, made laws, or administered justice. Each division of the army had its Graf Jarl, or count; each subdivision its centenary, or hundred-man; and all these fractions of the free population had the same right of deciding by suffrage in their own mallums, or peculiar courts, all their common affairs. In cases of opposition between the barbarian and the Roman jurisdiction, the overbearing arrogance of the one, and the abject baseness of the other, soon decided the question of supremacy.

In some provinces the two powers were not concurrent: there were no barbarians between the Loire and the Meuse, nor between the Alps and the Rhone; but the feebleness of the Roman government was only the more conspicuous. A few great proprietors cultivated a part of the province with the aid of slaves; the rest was desert, or only inhabited by *Bagaudæ*, runaway slaves, who lived by robbery. Some towns still maintained a show of opulence, but not one gave the slightest sign of strength; not one enrolled its militia, nor repaired its fortifications. Tours, renowned for the tomb of St. Martin, and the miracles attributed to it, appeared to be a capital of priests: nothing was to be seen within its walls but processions, churches, chapels, and books of devotion exposed for sale. Trèves and Arles had not lost their ancient passion for the games of the circus, and the crowd could not tear themselves from the theatre when the barbarians were at their gates. Other towns, and still more the villages, remained faithful to their ancient gods; and, spite of the edicts of successive emperors, many temples were still consecrated to paganism; many continued so, even to the end of the following century. Honorius wished to confer on the cities of southern Gaul a diet, at which they might have deliberated on public affairs: he did not even find public spirit enough to accept the offered privilege. It is true that they suspected, and, probably, not without reason, that his edict concealed some projects of financial extortion.

The description we have given of the state of Gaul applies equally to that of Spain, where the kings of the Suevi, the Vandals, the Alans, the Silingi, were encamped with their troops and their followers in the midst of Roman subjects, who had long ceased to offer resistance, yet whose abject submission had not earned for them the peace of slaves. A great portion of Spain was still Roman; but the districts which the barbarians had not yet entered had no communication with each other, nor with the seat of government: they could hope for no protection from any neighbouring aggression. Besides, if the barbarians occasionally plundered them with rapacity, or even, at their first coming, butchered the inhabitants most exposed to their fury, they afterwards protected the remaining population against the extortions of tax-gatherers; and the demands of the state were so excessive, that the people often preferred the sword of the Vandal to the staff of the lictor. Even Italy, which was, perhaps, more

uncultivated than any of the distant provinces,—Italy, whose richest plains were disfigured by wild forests, or unwholesome marshes,—was not exempt from the barbarian yoke. Although no longer occupied by a conqueror, she found hard masters in the confederates, or auxiliary troops of Germans and Scythians, of which the armies were almost entirely composed. Their tyranny, which was that of the sword, did not, however, preserve the inhabitants from the more oppressive power of the Roman magistrates. Pannonia and the banks of the Danube were no sooner evacuated by the Goths, than they were occupied by other nations of barbarians. The Moors and the Gætuli, and still more the fanatical Donatists and Circoncellians, kept Africa in a continual state of alarm. In short, there was not a single province of the Western empire in which a uniform government was maintained, or in which, under a common protection, man could live securely among his fellow-men.

The influence of the early events of the reign of Arcadius and Honorius was universal, and their consequences may, in some respects, be perceived to this day. Very different was the close of the reign of these indolent, vain, and cowardly princes. We should gain but little instruction from any attempt to understand the base intrigues of their palace; and, with regard to the competitors for the empire, who arose successively in Britain, in Gaul, in Spain, and at Rome, it would be useless to record their names. But, it is remarkable, that, in five years, seven pretenders to the throne, all very superior to Honorius in courage, talents, and virtues, were, in turn, sent captive to Ravenna, or punished with death; that the people constantly applauded the sentence passed upon them, and maintained their allegiance to the legitimate authority. So much progress had already been made by the doctrine of the divine right of kings, which the bishops had begun to preach under Theodosius; and so fully determined did the Roman world appear to perish with an imbecile monarch, rather than choose for themselves a deliverer.

Arcadius, who was governed alternately by his ministers, his eunuchs, and his wife, died at the age of thirty-one, on the 1st of May, 408, and left, at the head of the empire of the East, his son, Theodosius II., who was yet a child, with a council of women to direct him. The life of Honorius was of longer duration; he lived till the 15th of August, 423; but he also left his empire to a child, Valentinian III., who was his nephew. This

young prince was under the guidance of his mother; she was the same Placidia, the sister to Honorius and Arcadius, who had married Ataulphus, king of the Visigoths. Her second husband was Constantius, one of the best generals of the Western empire, who obtained the title of Cæsar. He was the father of Valentinian III., and died before Honorius.

Never could the helm of the state have passed into the feeble hands of women and of children under more unfavourable circumstances. The great revolution which was slowly taking place throughout the West, was hastened by the minority of the two emperors; yet the government of Placidia, though weak, was honourable: she had the talent of selecting and attracting to her court some great men, though she had not the power to restrain their passions, nor to make them act consistently for the public good. After her death, the world learned to estimate her loss by the vice and cowardice of her son. (A. D. 450—455.)

As we shall not bestow on these weak emperors the attention which it would require to become acquainted with all the scandalous details of their reigns, neither shall we attach to the barbarian kings of the same period a degree of importance of which they are equally unworthy. These kings, powerful as long as war lasted, while their whole nation was in action and relied implicitly upon the prudence of the leader of their choice, ceased to be persons of importance as soon as peace was concluded. From that moment every German determined to be his own defender, his own avenger, and to decide alone, and without advice, on whatever he judged advantageous; he was little influenced in his determinations by public authority, and less still by that of kings; for the little which was done for the common weal was done by the assembly of the people. Thus, the kings are only conspicuous by their private conduct, or rather, by their crimes and vices; for their virtues could only have been displayed in the administration of government, and in this they had no part. To the pride of riches they added the consciousness of being above the law; while the encouragements of the flatterers who surrounded them, especially of their Roman subjects, who excelled the barbarians in the arts of intrigue, carried to an unheard-of pitch the corruption of these chiefs of the people. It would be difficult to find, in any class of men, even among those whom public justice has consigned to the hulks and the galleys,

so many examples of atrocious crimes, assassinations, poisonings, and, above all, fratricides, as these royal families afforded during the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries. It would be unjust to the nations they governed to judge of them by the example of their chiefs, who alone occupy a conspicuous station in history. It is not the fact, that all feelings of respect for virtue, love of kindred, compassion for inferiors,—in a word, that justice and humanity were generally extinct among the barbarians, notwithstanding all the horrors we find in their annals, and of which we have suggested but a small part. But these nations were accustomed to consider their kings as a race apart, distinguished from themselves by their long hair; a race not subject to the same laws, nor moved by the same feelings, nor protected by the same securities. These kings, keeping themselves aloof from all other men, were singular in having family names, and in intermarrying only with each other; and we owe to them the introduction of that system of relationship between crowned heads which was before unknown in the world.

We have no authentic account of the kings of the Franks during the greater part of the fifth century. The reigns of Pharamond, Clodion, Merovæus, and even Childeric, (A. D. 420—486,) which are found registered in the histories of France, have scarcely any foundation in truth. The chronicle which contains their names says, that they reigned over the Franks; but, if the fact is true, it is still uncertain whether they governed the whole of the nation; the country where they resided is unknown; and, in short, no authentic history of their race can be traced earlier than the reign of Clovis. Neither do we know any thing of Gondecar, who is supposed to have been king of the Burgundians from 406 to 463: the crimes of his four sons, three of whom perished in the most horrible manner by fratricide, will be noticed hereafter.

The succession of the Visigothic king is better known. More civilized than any other of the Germanic tribes, the Visigoths permitted a greater stability of the royal authority, and formed a united body, even in time of peace. They had also some historians.

Ataulphus, who had led the Visigoths into Aquitaine and into Spain, who had contracted an alliance with the Romans, and had married Placidia, was assassinated at Barcelona, in the month of August, 415, by one of his own domestics. His successor Sie-

geric put to death six children of Ataulphus by a former wife, reduced Placidia to the wretched state of a captive, and made her walk before his horse twelve miles through miry ways, with the rest of the Roman women. He was killed, in his turn, after a few days. Wallia, his successor, made a new alliance with the Romans, restored Placidia to her brother, and declared war upon the other barbarians who had invaded Spain. He conquered them in a succession of engagements, exterminated the Silingi, and compelled the Suevi, the Alans, and the Vandals, to retreat into the mountains of Gallicia; he then restored the rest of Spain to the empire, and finally settled himself in peace at Toulouse, in Aquitaine, where he died, towards the end of the year 418. Dietrich, or, according to the Roman corruption, Theodoric, the son of the great Alaric, was elected in the room of Wallia, by the free choice of his soldiers. During a reign of thirty-three years, he established the dominion of the Visigoths in the south of Gaul and in Spain. He was killed in 451, in the battle of the plains of Champagne, where Attila was defeated. His eldest son, Thorismund, who succeeded him, was assassinated two years after by his brother, Theodoric II., who ascended the throne; and he, also, after a reign of thirteen years, (A. D. 453—466,) was murdered by another brother named Euric, who reigned from 466 to 484. In these times, fratricide was so common a crime among those of royal blood, that, although stained with it, Theodoric II. and Euric are justly considered as the two best and greatest kings who mounted the throne of the Visigoths.

The History of the Suevi in Gallicia and part of Lusitania, is little known; but, at the same period, we discover in it sons revolting against fathers, and brothers assassinating brothers. The Suevi kept their ground for more than half a century in Spain, before they embraced the Christian religion, and became Arians. Being surrounded on all sides by the Visigoths, their history contains merely an account of the wars which they had to maintain against these neighbours: they were long and bloody; 164 years were passed in fighting, before they could be brought to yield. In 573, Leovigild, king of the Visigoths, united them to the monarchy of Spain.

In the same province, the Alans had been almost destroyed by Wallia, in 418. The fate of the Vandals was more remarkable: it had a more durable influence upon civilization, and a closer connexion with the history of the Roman empire. Like the

Suevi and Alans, they had been conquered by Wallia, and driven among the mountains of Gallicia; but, when Spain was restored to the officers of Honorius, and afterwards to those of Valentinian III., the Vandals, led by their king, Gonderic, again spread themselves in Boetica, took Seville and Carthagera, and added to the command which they had obtained of the plains, the possession of a fleet which they found in the latter city. About this time, Gonderic died, and Genseric, his illegitimate brother, succeeded him. He was small in stature, lame in consequence of an accident, and austere in his manners and habits, disdaining the luxuries of the people he conquered. He spoke slowly and cautiously, inspiring reserve when he was silent, and terror when he gave way to the transports of anger. His ambition was without bounds, and without scruple: his policy, not less refined than that of the civilized people whom he opposed, prompted him to employ every kind of stratagem: he knew how to captivate the passions of men, while he embraced the whole world in the extent of his projects. He had not long been master of Carthagera, when the count Boniface, general of the Romans in Africa, sent him an invitation to cross over to that country.

Placidia, who governed the court, and what remained of the empire, in the name of her son Valentinian III., had chosen two men to direct her councils and her armies who were undoubtedly possessed of great talents, high character, and as much virtue as it was possible to preserve under such a government. One of these—the patrician *Ætius*, son of a Scythian who had died in the service of the empire—was brought up as a hostage at the court of Alaric: he governed Italy and Roman Gaul more by his influence over the barbarians than by his authority as a Roman magistrate. The other, count Boniface, who was the friend of St. Augustin, and reckoned among the protectors of the church, governed Africa. *Ætius* was jealous of his colleague, and resolved to destroy him by driving him to acts of rebellion. With the blackest perfidy he engaged Placidia to recall Boniface, and at the same time entreated Boniface not to return, but to fly to arms if he would preserve his head. Boniface imagined he had no resource but in appealing to the enemies of his country. His crime, which in its nature was inexcusable, appears to us still more so from the extent of its consequences.

By thus opening Africa to the Vandals, he not only hastened

the fall of the empire, but he annihilated the resources of an immense country, which, in consequence of this first invasion, has been lost to Christendom and to civilization; preserving to this day the name of Barbary, with a government worthy of the name. The repentance of Boniface, however, the favour of the church, and the friendship of St. Augustin, have transmitted his name to posterity without that weight of infamy which would have attached to it, if the rights of country had been understood in his day.

Genseric landed upon the shores of Africa in the month of May, 429, with about 50,000 men, collected not only among the Vandals, but from all the other Germanic adventurers who were willing to follow his standard. He invited the Moors, who, at the decline of the empire, had recovered some portion of their independence and boldness, and seized with joy an opportunity for pillage and revenge. He also ranged under his colours the Donatists and Circoncillions, who had been driven by persecution to the highest pitch of fanaticism; and who, reckoning among them three hundred bishops, and several thousands of priests, were able to carry with them a large part of the population. With these formidable auxiliaries Genseric advanced into Africa, less as a conqueror wishing to subdue a rich kingdom, than as a ravager bent on destruction. Furious in his hostility to an effeminacy which he despised, to riches which might be employed against him, to a population which, though subjugated, might keep him in dread of revolt, he resolved to lay waste the whole country. His excesses have, doubtless, been exaggerated by the hatred and terror of the Africans; but the total ruin of Africa, and the annihilation, as it may almost be called, of the population of so vast a country, are facts of which succeeding events leave not the smallest doubt.

Boniface having discovered the perfidy of Ætius, and terrified at the crime he had himself been led to commit, made vain efforts to remedy the frightful evils he had occasioned; but it was too late. After being beaten by Genseric in a great battle, he concentrated the Roman forces in the three cities of Carthage, Hippo, and Artha; the rest of Africa became a prey to the Vandals. Boniface himself withdrew into Hippo, and joined his friend, St. Augustin, who died during the siege of that town, the 28th of August, 430. Some re-enforcements which Boniface received from Italy and the East at the same time, enabled him

once more to take the field. He marched against Genseric; but he was conquered, and obliged to evacuate Hippo. He then retired into Italy, where he soon after died of the consequences of a wound which he had received in an engagement with Ætius.

Between the taking of Hippo and the final reduction of Africa, eight years elapsed, during which Genseric seemed more occupied in shedding the blood of his relations than that of his enemies. The race of Vandal kings could not escape the common fate of barbaric monarchs. Gonderic, the brother of Genseric, had left a wife and children whose right to the throne was superior to his own. He beheaded the sons, and cast their mother into a river of Africa. But it was not without a struggle of some duration that he ruined or destroyed all their adherents. Placidia believed him to be constantly occupied in parrying or avoiding the poniard of the assassin; she depended upon a treaty she had made with him; while Genseric was, in fact, preparing his forces to surprise Carthage. This great city, the Rome of the African world, (as a contemporary calls it,) opened its gates to the Vandals on the 9th of October, 429. The cruelty which had stained the triumph of Genseric in the six provinces of Africa, was not less conspicuous in the capture of the capital. After a sea of blood had been shed, every kind of property was pillaged; even the houses and estates near the city were divided among the conquerors; and Genseric made it an unpardonable crime for a Carthaginian or Roman to preserve any part of his possessions.

The loss of Africa was, perhaps, one of the greatest calamities which could have overtaken the Western empire: it was the only province the defence of which had hitherto been attended with no difficulty; the only one which supplied money, arms, and soldiers, without requiring any in return. Africa was also the granary of Rome and of Italy. The gratuitous distribution of corn among the people of Rome, of Milan, and of Ravenna, had put an end to the cultivation of land throughout the peninsula. It was impossible for the cost of production to be paid in Italy, while government levied the taxes in kind from the plains of Africa, and thus obtained sufficient for the support of the Roman people. The cessation of this annual tribute, instead of reviving agriculture, caused a dreadful famine, and a farther diminution of the population. The part which Ætius had borne in the ruin of Africa, by the shameful treachery which had been brought to light, must have rendered him an object of aversion to Placidia. But a danger

now threatened the empire far more alarming than any it had known before; one which involved the whole population; the existence of all the cities; the property and the life of every individual; and it was impossible to part with the only general who was capable of inspiring the troops with confidence, or of uniting into one body the forces of the Romans and of the barbarians:—Attila was at hand.

Attila, the Scourge of God,—such was the name in which he delighted,—was the son of Mundzuk, and the nephew of Rugilas, whom he succeeded on the throne of the Huns, in 433. That inundation of Tartar hordes which had driven before it the Alans, the Goths, and perhaps all the Germanic nations on the frontiers of the Roman empire, had made a voluntary halt. Having arrived at Dacia, (the modern Hungary,) the Huns had been enjoying the riches of the country which they had wrested from the Goths and their immediate neighbours. At the time when they stayed their conquests, they had ranged themselves under different chiefs, who all bore the title of king, and who acted in a manner wholly independent of each other. Rugilas himself had several brothers, who had, by turns, made war upon the Greeks, the Sarmatians, and the Germans, their neighbours. Attila also had a brother named Bleda, who shared the throne with him; but he proved, by becoming his assassin, that the manners of the Scythians resembled those of the Germans. He now stood alone at the head of that puissant nation of shepherds, which would neither enjoy nor endure the possession of civilization or of fixed abode; and he began to make the world tremble anew.

Attila took advantage of the terror with which his uncle Rugilas had inspired the Greeks, to impose upon Theodosius II., at Margus, the most shameful treaty that ever monarch signed. All those among the unfortunate subjects of Attila, or of the kings he had conquered, who had sought an asylum on the soil of the empire, were delivered up by the Greek ambassador to their furious master, and were crucified before his eyes. In like manner all the Romans who had escaped from his bondage, were restored to him, unless they could ransom themselves by paying twelve pieces of gold. The empire of Constantinople engaged to pay an annual tribute of 700 pounds of gold to the empire of Scythia: on these conditions Attila allowed Theodosius still to reign, while he employed himself in the conquest of the North.

This conquest was the most extensive that had ever been accomplished by armies in the course of one reign. Attila brought into subjection the whole of Scythia and Germania. His authority appears to have been acknowledged from the confines of China to the Atlantic. We are ignorant, however, of the particulars of his warlike expeditions, as well as of the victories obtained by his lieutenants. When he ascended the throne he was already past the prime of life, and was distinguished from his fellow-countrymen much more by his political sagacity than by his personal valour or activity. Among the Tartar portion of his subjects he had excited a high degree of superstitious enthusiasm, by pretending that he had found the sword of the god of War; this became his symbol, and, being fixed on the summit of an immense pile of wood, received divine honours from the Scythians. To subjugate the Germans, a different language and other artifices were required. But it is not very difficult for a barbarian conqueror to obtain the voluntary submission of the warlike and savage nations whom he invites to share his conquests, without asking them to change their laws, of which he is ignorant and reckless, or to pay him a tribute which their poverty could not supply. In proposing to them to follow his standard to the field, he does but invite them to their favourite sport.

It was for this reason, no doubt, that Attila succeeded, in a few years, and with no great difficulty, in causing himself to be acknowledged king of kings, by the very nations who had trodden under foot the Roman empire. And he was truly the king of kings; for his court was formed of chiefs, who, in offices of command, had learned the art of obedience. There were three brothers of the race of the Amales, all of them kings of the Ostrogoths; Ardaric, king of the Gepidæ, his principal confidant; a king of the Merovingian Franks; kings of the Burgundians, Thuringians, Rugians, and Heruli, who commanded that part of their nation which had remained at home, when the other part crossed the Rhine half a century before. The names of a great number of other nations who inhabited the vast regions of Tartary, Russia, and Sarmatia, are not even come down to us.

After so many victories, which left no trophies to posterity, Attila turned his arms once more against the countries of the South. He asserted that the treaty which he had concluded at Margus, with the emperor of the East, had been violated by the

Greeks; and, putting in motion simultaneously the immense multitude of warriors who followed his banners, he crossed the Danube at every point, from high Pannonia to the Black Sea. He advanced upon the whole extent of the Illyrian peninsula, destroying every thing in his way. (A. D. 441—446.) Seventy cities were levelled to the ground by his army; villages, houses, harvests, all were burnt; and such of the wretched inhabitants as escaped the sword, were carried away captive beyond the Danube. The Greeks were defeated in three pitched battles, and the army of the Huns advanced to the very walls of Constantinople, which had recently been shaken by an earthquake, and fifty-eight of their towers thrown down.

Yet the empire of the East survived even this devastation: some of its provinces were secure from invasion. Theodosius II. showed great patience under the sufferings of others. He rebuilt the walls of his capital; and, shut up within the precincts of his palace, he scarcely perceived the war that raged without. Nevertheless, one negotiator after another was sent to the camp of Attila; and, by dint of abject concessions, and of money distributed among his ministers, the Greeks induced him to retire beyond the Danube. Thither their ambassadors followed him. In their way to his camp they had to pass over those cities of Mœsia where the inhabitants were slain and the houses razed; where the place of the streets was only marked by ruins, and ashes, and dead bodies. Among the remains of the churches, however, they discovered some sick and wounded wretches, who had not had strength to crawl away, and who still dragged on a miserable existence. The ambassadors were moved to tears as they gave alms to the wretched beings who lingered among the ruins of Naissus, formerly one of the great arsenals of the empire. They crossed the Danube in boats, or canoes, formed of a single tree hollowed out; for the arts of civilized life had already disappeared, and the earth, like its inhabitants, had relapsed into savageness.

At the court of Attila, in an obscure village of Hungary, the ambassadors from the East found, among the crowd of barbarians and of conquered kings, the ambassadors from the West, who were come to appease the terrible monarch and to endeavour to maintain peace. What formed the strangest, the most incredible contrast, was, the paltriness of the motive which brought them there. It was for the sake of some golden vessels belonging to

the church of Sirmium, which Attila pretended to have been taken from him at the conquest of that city, that Ætius, or Valentinian III., sent ambassadors from Rome, and that the world was threatened with a war between Tartary and Europe. One of the ambassadors of Theodosius was secretly instructed by his master to bribe the prime minister of Attila, and persuade him to assassinate the dreaded conqueror. The Scythian monarch was not ignorant of this treacherous plot; but, though he manifested his indignation by some violent expressions, and treated the Roman name with profound contempt, he respected, even in these traitors, the rights of ambassadors, and left Theodosius in peace.

About the time when Theodosius II. died, (23th of June, 450,) and when the Greeks, from an inconceivable veneration for the royal blood, bestowed the crown on his sister Puleheria and the husband she might marry, (she married Marcian, an old senator,) Attila advanced from the banks of the Danube to those of the Rhine, to occupy Gaul, at the head of the Germanic nations.

At the confluence of the Rhine and the Neckar, he met a party of Franks, who had submitted to his authority, and with whom he passed the river, took and burned the city of Metz, and destroyed all its inhabitants: in like manner he laid waste Tongres, and, crossing the country as far as the Loire, laid siege to Orleans.

The patrician Ætius, who governed the West in the name of Valentinian III., had established his reputation in Gaul by victories over the Franks, the Burgundians, and the Visigoths. He had scarcely any Roman soldiers in his ranks; but he sedulously cultivated the friendship of the Scythians and Alans, from whose race he sprang, and had engaged numerous bands of them in the service of the empire. He had been careful to conciliate the favour of Attila himself, to whom he had intrusted his son, perhaps as a hostage, or, possibly, in order to secure his being brought up far from the dangers of the imperial court. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate to undertake to defend Gaul against him. The ancient inhabitants, the Romans, were without power to resist such an enemy: the barbarians of German race who were established in Gaul, were terrified at the idea of a Tartar invasion, which threatened to change into a desert that country in which they began to taste the tranquil enjoyments of life. Ætius visited successively

the kings of the Franks, the Burgundians, and the Visigoths, who were able to afford him powerful assistance. He likewise had recourse to the smaller tribes, who wandered at will throughout Gaul, encouraging them to assemble under his standard. The Taifalæ, in Poitou; the Saxons, in Bayeux; the Breones, in Rhætia; the Alans, in Orleans and at Valence; the Sarmatians, who were dispersed over all the provinces, promised him their assistance. Other barbarians, who did not form any national body, engaged themselves in the mercenary troops of letes and confederates. Even the Armoricans furnished soldiers; and of this collection of troops, among whom were to be found every variety of arms and of language, Ætius formed the army of the empire.

But in military skill, and in the power of tactics, the Roman empire retained its superiority to the last stage of its decay. When an able general had drawn up his troops and inspired them with courage, he was not appalled by the numbers of the enemy. Attila was said to have invaded the Gauls with 500,000 men. Whatever was the real strength of his army, the multitude of these hungry warriors was to him an incumbrance, while to Ætius it was an advantage. The king of the barbarians vainly wished to take advantage of the most extensive plains of Gaul, to draw out all his battalions: he retreated from the environs of Orleans to the neighbourhood of Châlons, in Champagne. Ætius pursued him, and fiercely disputed with him the possession of a small eminence which commanded the rest of the plain, and seemed to both generals an important position. At length, Thorismund, the eldest son of the king of the Visigoths, remained master of it. Jornandes relates, that the rivulet which flowed at the foot of this hill was swollen with blood, till it overflowed its banks like a torrent. Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, was killed at the commencement of the battle, and lay buried under heaps of slain. His son Thorismund and Ætius were separated from the main body of their army, and were very near falling into the hands of the Huns; but Attila, mean while, was so alarmed at the prodigious losses he had experienced, that he hemmed himself in with a wall of Scythian chariots, which he opposed as a fortification to the assailants. Night closed in before it was possible to know on which side victory lay. Attila's quiescence in the morning showed that he considered himself conquered. If the account of an almost contemporary historian may be credited, 162,000 men lay dead on the field of battle.

This victory was the last that adorned the annals of Rome: if it did not preserve *her* from ruin, *we*, at least, have been saved by it;—saved from Tartar barbarism and Russian civilization. If the empire of Attila had been perpetuated, if it had spread over Gaul and the temperate regions of Europe, perhaps the nature of the country would have led the Huns to renounce their pastoral life, as the Moguls renounced it in India, and the Mantchou Tartars in China: but the vices of the nation, stamped upon it by servitude, would have been perpetuated, as they have been in Russia—as they have been wherever the Tartar has ruled; and the nations which at this day diffuse light and knowledge throughout the globe, would scarcely have been in a condition to receive what might have reached them from without.

It is, indeed, with astonishment and admiration, that we contemplate the most formidable power which ever affrighted the world, dashed to pieces against the last ruins of ancient civilization. The Roman empire had declined so rapidly, that it is difficult to imagine how it furnished aspirants to a throne so surrounded with danger and disgrace. But the dominion of Attila was overthrown to the very dust, before that of Theodosius fell. Ætius did not care to disturb the retreat of the Scythian conqueror, who was formidable even in defeat: he waited until he ventured to seek his revenge, and to attack the Romans anew. In the campaign which followed (A. D. 452,) Attila poured forth his troops from Pannonia, passed the Julian Alps, and advanced to the siege of Aquileia. The extent of his ravages, and the certainty of having no mercy from the barbarian, produced an effect upon the people of Italy that led to the erection of a splendid monument, which has perpetuated to our days the memory of the terror he inspired. All the inhabitants of that rich part of the plain of Italy which is situated at the mouths of the great rivers, and called Venetia, took refuge in the low lands, upon the islands, almost covered with water, which choke the mouths of the Adige, the Po, the Brenta, and the Tagliamento. There they sheltered themselves under huts made of branches, and transported thither a small part of their wealth. In a short time they constructed more commodious habitations, and several small cities were seen to rise as it were out of the waters. Such was the origin of Venice; and that haughty republic justly called herself the eldest daughter of the Roman empire. She was founded by the Romans while the em-

pire was yet standing, and the independence which characterized her early years was still inviolate to our own time.

Aquileia withstood a lengthened siege; but all the other cities of northern Italy,—Milan, Pavia, Verona, and, perhaps, even Turin, as well as Como, at the foot of the Helvetian and Gallic Alps,—opened their gates to the conqueror. Disease, the natural consequence of the intemperance, the violence, and the vices of a barbarian army, avenged, as they may again avenge, the Italians; and Attila began to feel the pressing necessity of leading back his companions in arms to a country less pernicious to natives of a northern clime, when the ambassadors of Valentinian and the senate of Rome came to demand peace. They were accompanied by pope Leo I. The striking figure and calm self-possession of the venerable pontiff inspired the people with respect, and struck awe into every heart, not even excepting that of the pagan king, although he had professed himself a prophet. With a moderation unknown to him, perhaps the effect, in some measure, of religious fear, he granted peace to the empire. In the following year, (A. D. 453,) Attila died in Dacia, during the intoxication of a banquet. His empire fell with him. Ardaric, his favourite, established the monarchy of the Gepidæ in Dacia, between the Carpathian mountains and the Black Sea, in the very spot which had been regarded by Attila as the seat of his power. The Ostrogoths took possession of Pannonia, between Vienna and Sirmium; and Irnak, the youngest son of Attila, retired with the Huns into Little Tartary, where the remnant of this people were enslaved, some years after, by the Igours, who issued from the plains of Siberia.

CHAPTER VIII.

Fall of the Western Empire.—Rome taken and sacked by Genseric, called in by Eudoxia, Widow of Valentinian III.—Ten Emperors in twenty-three Years.—Odoacer.—Final Extinction of the Form of the Empire in the West.—Change unimportant to the People.—Their wretched Condition.—Some Cities of the West retain their Allegiance to the Eastern Empire.—Growth of the Frankic Monarchy.—Chlodwig, commonly called Clovis.—His Victory over Syagrius.—His Marriage with Chlotilde of Burgundy.—His Conversion.—Battle of Tolbiac.—His Baptism.—His Wars with the Burgundians, and with the Visigoths.—His Treachery.—His Assassination of all the Kings of his Family.—His Protection of the Church.—Miracles attributed to him.—Limited Power of the Frankic Kings.—Sovereignty of the Army.—State of Government.—Death of Clovis.—A. D. 476—511.

It is impossible not to remark, in communities and in nations, a principle of vitality, a power of resistance, which is brought into action after great calamities, and prolongs the existence of sinking states when they seemed on the brink of annihilation. This power has, in its effects, a resemblance to the vital energy which exists in man and other organized beings; but it is not, like that, one of the mysteries of nature. On the contrary, the principle of which we are speaking, is the necessary, the easily anticipated consequence of those efforts which each individual makes to improve his condition, and to defend himself from the common calamities, or to meet them with the smallest possible injury: in thus providing for his own security, he is really labouring for the preservation of the community to which he belongs.

On every side, the empire of Rome had been surrounded by causes which conspired to work its ruin. During the three first centuries, it had constantly been declining; and when we recollect that, in the century and a half which followed,—a period which we have examined in detail,—the empire was assailed by attacks, any of which seemed sufficient to overthrow it, our only wonder will be how it continued to exist.

The vital principle exhibited in the human frame often repairs the ravages of disease, or entirely surmounts them. Although, in some cases, it does but prolong the sufferings of the body, we are not permitted to endeavour to abridge these sufferings; for

we know not but the moral may become perfect through the pains of the physical being. It would be a fiction of the fancy, however, to attribute to social bodies the properties or the sensitiveness of individual natures; and we must not allow our pity and regret for the long decline of Rome, nor our reverence for all its grandeur and its glory,—for the thousand recollections about to be obliterated,—to make us forget that truer compassion which we owe to men like ourselves; to whole generations that endured the lingering torments of their country's expiring state, and the burden of all its calamities.

The revolution which overthrew the Roman empire, and swept away the ancient forms of civilization from the earth, made room for new combinations and new social institutions, and led to progress of another kind. It was, perhaps, the most important of all the convulsions which have agitated the human race. It was time for this great change to take place; it was time that the universal languor and feebleness of soul which lowered the character of humanity should give place to a new principle of virtue, or, at least, to a new principle of action.

Large empires derive a power of self-preservation from their size: it is their privilege to be able to endure bad government in proportion to their extent. Ancient Greece afforded instances of odious tyrants, whose names are for ever covered with infamy. Yet, neither Dionysius of Syracuse, nor Phalaris, nor Pisistratus, would have been able to inflict upon their fellow citizens such calamities as those to which the subjects of the bad emperors were exposed. Never would those men have thought of confounding the innocent with the guilty in one universal proscription; of razing a city to the ground, or putting all its inhabitants to the sword: such conduct would have been their own destruction, since the city was their whole domain. On the contrary, the merciless acts committed by the emperors, the national chastisements which they inflicted, as well as the calamities resulting from the wars in which they engaged, were extensive in proportion to the size of their territory.

But man does not become the less sensible of his sufferings, because the state to which he belongs is of vast dimension; and the number of victims to a single act of cruelty, or a single fault, exceeded all belief. In like manner, the conduct of a weak, vain monarch, who persisted in a disastrous war, produced consequences not in proportion to the character of the man, but to

the extent of his kingdom. The obstinacy of Theodosius II. within the walls of Constantinople, or of Honorius at Ravenna, which they mistook for noble daring, produced the entire devastation of Illyricum, Gaul, and Italy. No empire but that of Rome could have withstood such shocks. From the time when the monarchy of Attila had fallen, and the Goths and Vandals, established in their new country, had begun to exchange the work of destruction for that of preservation, the empire of the West had regained a chance of prolonging its languishing existence; for that of the East, which was scarcely less enfeebled, or less surrounded by powerful foes, maintained itself a thousand years longer. Ravenna, the seat of government, was equally sheltered from foreign invasion; and if the empire had enjoyed a period of tranquillity like that which Italy obtained a few years after the extinction of the Western emperors, so great is the predilection of every people for an old established authority, and so strong their preference for evils with which they are familiar, to untried and doubtful reform, that in all probability the alteration which had been the result of force, would have been admitted into the frame-work of society. A new organization would have brought about a closer connexion between the centre of government and those provinces which were not conquered; and the state, superior in extent to any in modern Europe, would have recovered the means of resistance.

But monarchical states are not only subject to the calamities which assail them from without, through the jealousy or hatred of their neighbours; they have also the chance of falling under the sway of the most stupid, or the basest of mankind. These chances of succession were fatal to the empire of the West. From the death of Attila, in 453, to the extinction of the imperial dignity, in 475, ten emperors, in the space of twenty-three years, succeeded each other on the throne; and the ten revolutions which hurled them from it were more than so frail a structure could resist.

These revolutions were in a great degree attributable to the last descendant of the great Theodosius. Valentinian III. had reached the age of manhood; his mother was dead, Boniface was dead, Attila was dead. Valentinian imagined the highest privilege of the imperial dignity to be that of securing impunity for all the vices which subject private individuals to the punishment of the laws. The greatness and renown of Ætius were irksome

to him; and the first time his coward hand brandished a sword, he employed it, with the help of his eunuchs and courtesans, to kill the general who had saved, and who alone could still save, the empire. In less than a year after, (March 16, 455,) he was assassinated, in his turn, by Petronius Maximus, a senator, whose wife he had insulted.

Maximus was then acknowledged emperor; but the people found in him nothing deserving of supreme power. It was equally impossible for the Romans not to despise the descendants of Theodosius, and not to extend their contempt to those men who, devoid of either virtues or talents, took advantage of the fall of these princes to raise themselves to the throne.

As nothing indicated clearly where the right to sovereign power resided, the road to it was again laid open to ambition, intrigue, and crime. The sufferings and the ignominy of the Roman empire were increased by a new calamity which happened in the year of Valentinian's death. Eudoxia, the widow of that emperor, who had afterwards become the wife of Maximus, avenged the murder of her first husband, by plotting against her second; reckless how far she involved her country in the ruin. She invited to Rome Genseric, king of the Vandals, who not content with having conquered and devastated Africa, made every effort to give a new direction to the rapacity of his subjects, by accustoming them to maritime warfare, or, more properly speaking, piracy. His armed bands, who, issuing from the shores of the Baltic, had marched over the half of Europe, conquering wherever they went, embarked in vessels which they procured at Carthage, and spread desolation over the coasts of Sicily and Italy. On the 12th of June, 455, they landed at Ostia. Maximus was killed in a seditious tumult excited by his wife. Defence was impossible; and from the 15th to the 29th of June, the ancient capital of the world was pillaged by the Vandals with a degree of rapacity and cruelty to which Alaric and the Goths had made no approach. The ships of the pirates were moored along the quays of the Tiber, and were loaded with a booty which it would have been impossible for the soldiers to carry off by land.

The unhappy Romans were compelled, by protracted tortures, to discover all their hidden treasures: neither were they secure from the cupidity of Genseric's troops when stripped of all they possessed. The hope of extorting a ransom from their relations or friends led to thousands of noble captives being carried over to

Carthage. Eudoxia herself shared in the miseries which she had brought upon Rome: Genseric forcibly carried her off, with her two daughters, the only survivors of the race of Theodosius the Great, in one of his vessels, and in spite of the attachment the Romans had recently shown to the hereditary claims of this family, they found themselves, against their wishes, reinvested with the power of bestowing the crown on a ruler of their choice. This prerogative falling to a people alike devoid of national spirit and of protecting institutions, of respect for justice or for virtue, could not fail to prove fatal. The Gauls, the Greeks, the confederate barbarians who composed the army, all in turn contended for the privilege of giving a chief to the empire; and the favourite of one party was no sooner invested with the purple, than a hostile faction rose up to dethrone him.

In the calamitous period of twenty-one years, which embraces the last convulsive struggles of the Western empire (A. D. 455—476,) one man signalized himself above all those ephemeral emperors whom he created or dethroned at his will, without having it in his power to occupy their place. This was the patrician Ricimer, a Swabian or Suevus by birth, and the son of the daughter of Wallia, king of the Visigoths. A popular sentiment, which it is surprising to discover in a country where there could not be said to be a people, rose in opposition to this barbarian, when he would have assumed the purple; though the men he nominated to wear it were sure to be elected. The haughty Swabian, disdaining to obey those whom he considered as his own creatures, accomplished their downfall before they were well seated on the throne. He thus destroyed the very root of civil authority and obedience. He died the 20th of August, 472. At this period, the provinces of the West acknowledged no other power than that of the barbarian troops, who took the name of Confederates: these men governed Italy. Two of their chiefs, who came in the train of the king of the Huns, next contended for the empire.

Orestes, a patricius of Pannonian extraction, who had long served Attila as secretary and ambassador, placed upon the throne his own son Romulus Augustus, who, in mockery of his youth, was called Agastulus; while Odoacer, the son of Edecon, another minister of Attila, excited the Confederates to revolt against the chief they had just elected. He promised them a third of the soil of Italy to divide amongst them; caused Orestus to be put to

death, and shut up his son in Lucullus's villa, in Campania, without choosing to appoint his successor.

Thus, in 476, was accomplished the extinction of the empire of the West. But this revolution, so important in our eyes, which forms so marked an epoch in history, was so disguised from the view of contemporaries, that they did not foresee its consequences. Odoacer compelled the senate of Rome to send away the imperial insignia to Zeno, emperor of Constantinople; declaring, that one ruler was sufficient to govern the whole empire. He conveyed a request to this emperor, that he might himself be allowed to govern the diocese of Italy, under the title of Patriarch. It is true, he also took the appellation of King. This was a barbaric dignity, which had not been held incompatible with the command of an army, or of a Roman province. It rather denoted a ruler of men, than of territory. It was conferred on Odoacer by his soldiers, among whom the Heruli were, probably, the most numerous; whence he is often represented as king of the Heruli. Mean while, the imperial government was little changed from what it had been during the last century in Italy; that is to say, the power was completely in the hands of armed barbarians; while, at the same time, the senate of Rome continued to assemble as usual; the consuls were appointed yearly, one by the East, the other by Italy; the imperial laws were proclaimed in Italy, and respected as before; and none of the municipal or provincial authorities were changed. It is difficult to discover what that public opinion was, and under what form it was expressed, which had still power to prevent the sovereign of Italy and of the army from taking upon himself the title of Roman Emperor, and to convince him that he was too weak to attempt the suppression of rights and claims which he was unable to assert for himself, although he could not endure to see them granted to another. We should look in vain for Romans, or for Italians, who had still so far preserved the dignity of their ancient prejudices as to repel a master who should adopt the title of King of Rome or of Italy. Odoacer, however, felt that such a power existed, and took care not to oppose it. He founded anew the kingdom of Italy, and called it by another name. He was independent, without daring to appear so. By the distribution of lands in Italy among the confederate soldiers, he satisfied their cupidity without relaxing their discipline; and as he no longer recruited his army with the barbarian adventurers

who had yearly flocked to his standard, he kept it within moderate limits, though sufficiently powerful to guard his frontiers. He made no attempt to extend his dominions beyond Italy, from which Sicily and Sardinia had already been separated by the invasions of Genseric: on one occasion, however, he made war against Illyricum, and on another against Noricum, with equal success. The whole extent of country between the Alps and the Danube had been fertilized by Roman agriculture, and enriched by Roman commerce, and by the residence of Roman legions: it was looked upon as the nursery of the best soldiers of the empire. But it had been so devastated by successive invasions, that the race of its Roman inhabitants was nearly extinct, and was succeeded by barbarians of whose history nothing is known. The Rugians, who possessed it at the time of which we are speaking, were conquered by Odoacer, and great numbers of them brought captive into Italy, to assist in the cultivation of the deserts of that country. Deserts they might truly be called. The population had been swept away by every scourge under heaven; war, plague, famine, public tyranny, and domestic slavery. Throughout the preceding century, the existence of the people had been entirely artificial. They were principally supported by the distributions of corn, which the emperors had bound themselves to continue at Rome, Milan, and other great towns where the court resided. The largesses had ceased with the loss of Africa and the ruin of Sicily. Odoacer did not attempt to renew them. Mean while, most of the landed proprietors had ceased to cultivate their estates: there was little encouragement to incur great expense in growing corn, which was afterwards given away in the market-place. The rearing of cattle had for a time superseded the cultivation of grain; but both the herds, and the slaves who tended them, had been carried off by continual incursions of barbarians. The desolation of these regions is frequently expressed in simple yet affecting language in the contemporary letters of the saints. Pope Gelasius, (A. D. 496,) speaks of Emilia, Tuscany, and other provinces, in which the human race was almost extinct. St. Ambrose, of the towns of Bologna, Modena, Reggio, Piacenza, which remained deserted, together with the adjacent country. Those who have seen the Campagna di Roma in our own days, have witnessed the desolation of a country ruined by bad laws, even more than by foreign aggression. Let them imagine the gloomy scenery which now

surrounds the capital, extended over every part of Italy, and they will have some idea of the kingdom of Odoacer.

The usurpation of Odoacer had relaxed, but not severed, the tie which united the more distant western provinces to the empire. Several districts of Spain, and particularly the sea-coast, had preserved their independence against the Suevi and the Visigoths; some towns in Africa had escaped the attacks of the Vandals; and there were provinces in the centre of Gaul which obeyed neither the Franks, Burgundians, nor Visigoths. In those territories which had been occupied by the barbarians, they were looked upon (according to the legal expression which assigned them their quarters) as guests, rather than as masters. The inhabitants did not cease to consider themselves as Romans; and they long retained their name, their language, their customs, and their laws. The eyes of all were turned towards Constantinople; they all recognised as their emperor, Zeno, (A. D. 474—491,) who had succeeded to Leo, (A. D. 457—474,) upon the Eastern throne. The Greek emperors escaped the storm which raged around them, by their good fortune more than by their wisdom. They were unacquainted with the languages of the western provinces, which they despised as barbarian; and they were alike ignorant of their condition and of their interests. They had no means of defending, scarcely any of governing them; and, as they had no chance of drawing supplies from them, they abandoned their administration to men of wealth and rank, who assumed the title of Count of the several cities. These counts flattered the emperor in their correspondence, and were flattered, in return, by imperial titles: the power they exercised was that of independent sovereigns.

Ægidius, count of Soissons, seems to have been one of the most powerful of these nobles of Gaul, who, during the decline of the empire, were indebted to their wealth for a kind of sovereignty. He gained several advantages over the Visigoths, at the head of an army of Franks accustomed to serve in the pay of Rome; a circumstance which has caused it to be said that he reigned over the Franks during the exile of Childeric, the father of Clovis. His son, Afranius Syagrius, also governed Soissons with the title of Count, during the ten years which succeeded the fall of the Roman empire, (A. D. 476—486.) He was, by these means, brought into the neighbourhood of the Franks, who were ancient allies of the empire, and accustomed to fight under

its banner for payment; but he had nothing left to offer them,—neither battles nor spoils. The Franks, however, without making war, had contrived to extend their frontier in Belgium. They were become masters of Tournai, Cambray, Terouane, and Cologne; and, in each of these cities, they had a different king. All these petty kings ascribed their origin to Merovæus (Meerwig, or Sea Hero,) for the date of whose half fabulous existence we must rather go back to the first appearance of the Franks, about the year 250, than to the middle of the fifth century, where it is commonly placed. There was one among them,—a young man, scarcely twenty years of age,—who was greatly distinguished by his personal appearance, and by his bravery, and who had already reigned five years over the Franks of Tournai. His name was Clovis;* he was the son of Childeric, who had been banished on account of the licentiousness of his manners; but who was afterwards recalled by his tribe when age had calmed his passions. Like all the rest of his race, he worshipped the gods of Germania; but his enthusiastic mind was ever ready to credit all the prodigies which were related to him by the priests of a different religion, who easily won him over to their belief. In 486, he proposed to the warriors of Tournai, of the tribe of the Salian Franks, to go and share the riches of their Roman neighbours, who neither knew how to defend them, nor how to bestow them upon other defenders. Not more than 3000 or 4000 Franks answered his appeal, and took up their francisque or war hatchet, ready to follow him. Ragnacar, another king of the Franks, at Cambray, came with his followers to join the standard of Clovis. They sent a message of defiance to Syagrius. The Roman count was not so formidable as to make it necessary to resort to surprise; nevertheless, he occupied the frontier, and all the soldiers north of the Seine, calling themselves Roman or legionary, or letes or federal, assembled at his order. The armies met; Syagrius was beaten, and the Franks took and pillaged Soissons. Syagrius, in his flight, crossed the Seine; but the cities along this river and the Loire, although calling themselves Roman, had taken no thought about their future safety. They possessed no soldiers, no treasure, no means of resistance.

* The Roman corruption of Chlodwig, or, in modern German, Ludwig; in Modern French, Louis.—(TRANS.)

Syagrius could obtain no succour from them; he, therefore, passed the Loire, and advanced to Toulouse, to crave the assistance of Alaric II., who had reigned for two years over the Visigoths. The counsellors of this king, who was yet a child, thought the moment favourable for extinguishing the last remains of Roman power. They took Syagrius, therefore, and loading him with chains, sent him back to Clovis, who suffered him to die in prison.

And this is nearly all that we can ever know concerning the combats which finally annihilated the dominion of the Romans in Gaul, and laid the foundation of the French monarchy. The task of the historian is no longer what it was, when, following the annals of Rome, he had to choose from rich and varied materials; to combine, to reconcile, to select. Grief and shame had reduced almost all the west of Europe to silence. Who, indeed, could wish to preserve the details of revolutions, every crisis of which exposed to view the vices of the people and of the government? The Germans could not write, the Romans would not. One man alone, a prelate and a saint,—Gregory, bishop of Tours,—undertook, at the end of the following century, to make known to us the origin of the French monarchy; and, by his work, he affords the only light that has been thrown upon the other countries of the West. It has been abridged, and copied, and amplified, by turns, from the seventh century to our own time: but commentaries serve only to mislead us; we must consult the original, if we wish to come at truth. This rude narrative ought to satisfy us; it exhibits, at once, the manners of the age, and the opinions of the church; and though it consists almost entirely of a tissue of crimes, we ought not hastily to turn from its perusal. It is right to know what we have to dread from the various revolutions of human society. We shall set a higher value on the virtues of our contemporaries, and on the happiness we enjoy, and we shall endure with greater patience the evils which accompany all human institutions, when we know what our ancestors really were.

Clovis had fixed himself at Soissons. The rich booty which he had divided among his victorious warriors, and which, according to the custom of the Franks, had been distributed by lot in equal portions amongst all the soldiers, had drawn fresh adventurers to their standards. There was no other king of the Franks who seemed to equal him in activity and courage; and the Ger-

man was always free to choose the chief with whom he preferred to share the dangers of the war. Nearly a third part of Gaul, from the Oise to the Loire, was given up without defence to the pillage or conquest of the Franks. We have no record of their progress in these provinces. Whatever may have been the weakness and cowardice of the Romans, it was impossible for an army of 4000 men to occupy, at once, their rural domains and their cities. Fourteen years elapsed between the first victory of Clovis over Syagrius, and the time when the Loire, the Mozelle, the Jura, and the Rhine, formed the boundaries of his kingdom. During this period, from 486 to 500, the Romans negotiated with him, in hopes of lightening the yoke which they were forced to bear. They sent a deputation to the conqueror, and, by the payment of tribute money, bought his protection.

The bishops, on their side, were intent on the conversion of the king who was to reign over them. They found his mind accessible to that fanaticism with which they wished to inspire it; and as he was not yet a Christian, nor consequently imbued with a sectarian partiality, they imagined he would be more favourable to orthodox opinions than the kings of the Burgundians and Visigoths, who were Arians. They resolved to take advantage of his fondness for women, to gain him over to their side, and, after causing him to divorce his wife,—who was a Frank and a pagan, and the mother of his eldest son,—Aurelian, a Gaul, the Christian adviser of Clovis, negotiated his marriage with Chlotilde.

The barbarian kings intermarried with none but women of royal blood; and Clovis would have scorned the daughter of a subject. He was not yet powerful enough to obtain the daughter of a king of the Vandals, the Burgundians, or the Visigoths; but Chlotilde was at the same time of royal descent, and persecuted. Gondicar, king of the Burgundians, who died in 463, had left four sons, each of them bearing the title of king, commanding the armies, and sharing the conquests of their nation. But Gondebald, the eldest of these four princes, took away the life of his three brothers in succession. Having surprised two of them, Chilperic and Godemar, in their residence at Vienne, he killed Chilperic, who had surrendered himself his prisoner, with his own hand; ordered his wife to be thrown into the Rhone with a stone tied round her neck; and her two sons to be beheaded, and their bodies cast into a well.

Two daughters remained captive: one of these was Chlotilde. Godemar, the other brother, had taken refuge in a tower; but the savage Gondebald had the lower part filled with combustibles, and burned him alive. The fourth brother, Godegesil, perished ten years later.

Chlotilde, who escaped the disastrous fate of her house, is supposed to have been in confinement at Geneva. She had been educated by an orthodox bishop. She was handsome, and enthusiastic; and she felt it an act of piety to hate her persecutor. She abhorred him as the murderer of her nearest kindred, and, still more, because he was an Arian; but she dissembled her hatred at the moment of her marriage. Gondebald, like many other kings, thought his crimes forgotten, as soon as he could forget them himself, and consented to the marriage of his niece with Clovis, as a bond of union between the two nations. St. Chlotilde, as she was called by the priests, was very imperfectly known to her uncle Gondebald. No length of time, no attempts at reconciliation, no benefits conferred, could eradicate from her heart the hatred she had conceived. Her marriage was celebrated in 493; and, thirty years after, she demanded and obtained the vengeance for which she had constantly panted. The confidence which the bishops of Gaul had placed in the charms of Chlotilde was fully justified. She converted her husband; persuaded him first to have his children baptized; and afterwards prevailed on him to seek the protection of her God in a moment of danger.

In 490, the Allemans had invaded all the country which lies between the Moselle and the Meuse. To the Franks, this was a national war; all their tribes assembled, and gave battle to the aggressors at Tolbiac, four leagues from Cologne. They were repulsed, however, and seemed upon the point of being routed, when Clovis invoked the God of Chlotilde: animated with fresh courage, he again attacked the enemy; the Alleman chief was slain; and his soldiers immediately offered to join the standard of Clovis, and acknowledge him as their king. The two nations spoke the same language, their origin was the same, and their manners and customs were similar; they were, therefore, easily united; and Clovis returned from the field of Tolbiac at the head of an army much more numerous than that which he had led thither, or than any which he had ever before commanded. He

was acknowledged king by his enemies, and suzerain or chief by the other kings of the Franks, who till then had been his equals.

On his return to Soissons, his seat of empire, Clovis became one of the catechumens of St. Remi, the archbishop of Rheims: his soldiers, carried away like himself by the universal belief of the people amongst whom they lived, by the miracles which they heard attested, and by the magnificence of the catholic worship, readily followed his example. On Christmas-day, 496, he repaired, with an army of only 3000 soldiers, to the cathedral of Rheims, where St. Remi poured upon him the water of baptism, uttering these words, which have been handed down to us:—"Bow down thy head, oh! Sicambrian, with humility. Adore what thou hast burnt, and burn what thou hast adored." The joy of the clergy throughout Gaul was boundless, when they heard of the conversion of king Clovis. In him, the orthodox believers gained a defender and an avenger; a persecutor of their rivals, at the moment when their need was greatest. For the emperor Zeno at Constantinople, and all the barbarian kings, —at Ravenna, at Vienne, at Toulouse, at Carthage, in Spain and in Germany,—were either heretic or pagan. Hence it is, that the king of the Franks has been called the eldest son of the church. St. Avitus, archbishop of Vienne, on the Rhone, wrote to Clovis,—“Your faith is our victory.” This prelate was a Burgundian subject; but he rejoiced in the expectation that Clovis would attack the rulers of his nation; and all the clergy of Gaul, whether they were subject to the Burgundians or Visigoths, showed the same zeal for the future triumph of Clovis. At the same time, the confederated towns of Armorica, which hitherto had defended themselves against the barbarians by the force of their own arms, offered to treat with Clovis. They entered into an alliance with him, or, rather, became incorporated in his nation; and the Armoricans were placed upon an equal footing with the Franks. All the barbarian soldiers that remained scattered throughout Gaul, who till then had followed the standards of Rome, under the name of *Letes* or *Confederates*, were, in like manner, adopted by the Frankic nation; the new king saw his empire extending to the ocean; to the Loire, which separated it from the Visigoths; to the mountains around Langres, the boundary of the Burgundian territory; and to the Rhine, which divided it from the independent Franks.

Such an extent of conquest might have sufficed to satisfy the

ambition of the little chieftain of 3000 warriors. But Clovis knew that he could only maintain his influence over his companions in arms by new victories, and by holding out fresh booty to their rapacity. Many of the soldiers lamented the submission of the Roman provinces. Each of those protected by Clovis was rescued from the cupidity of plunderers: but he endeavoured to persuade them, that whatever additions he had made to his territory, there would always remain in Gaul, provinces to pillage, estates to parcel out, and inhabitants to reduce to slavery.

Clovis sought an occasion of quarrel with the two nations which shared with him the empire of Gaul; but with that policy to which he owed success, even more than to his valour, he began by giving them insidious counsels before he attempted to surprise them.

The Burgundians were first the object of his attack. They were governed by the two brothers of Chlotilde: Godegesil, who had fixed his seat at Geneva; and Gondibard, who resided at Vienne. The kingdom was not divided between them, but each had endeavoured to secure a large number of warriors, or *Leudes*: this name, which answers to lieges,* describes those partisans attached to their chiefs by benefits conferred. Each of the brothers, in distrust of the other, had retired to as great a distance as possible, to escape from perfidious snares, and to enjoy at liberty the pleasures then attached to kingly power. From this mutual dread proceeded the custom so universal among barbarians, of designating kings by the name of their capitals, rather than by that of their provinces. One was *king at Vienne*, the other *king at Geneva*, but both of them were kings of the Burgundians. In the year 500, Clovis gained over Godegesil: he persuaded him to separate himself from his brother at the moment when the Franks were giving battle to his countrymen; and as a reward for his compliance, he promised to assist him in gaining sole possession of the throne of the Burgundians. He then declared war upon this people, and led on his Franks to the combat. The two nations met upon the banks of the Ousche, near Dijon; but at the very moment when the battle was about to begin, Godegesil, with all his forces, deserted the national banner, and joined that of Clovis. Gondebald, in dismay, took to flight, and could not believe himself safe until he had shut

* *Leute*—people. (German.)—(Transl.)

himself up in Avignon. Godegesil lost no time in reaching his brother's palace at Vienne, and taking possession of all the riches it contained; while Clovis pursued his ravages into Provence, where, tearing up the vines and burning the olive trees, he forcibly carried off the peasants, and loaded his soldiers with booty. But when he endeavoured to render himself master of Avignon, he found the walls too strong for warriors so ignorant of the art of besieging: he was obliged, therefore, to enter into a compromise with Gondebald, and to consent to retire to the banks of the Seine, with all the spoils which his troops had obtained.

Gondebald being delivered from the fear of the Franks, immediately marched to Vienne with a great body of Burgundians, who were indignant at the treachery of Godegesil. He gained entrance through an aqueduct, and having found his brother, who in terror had sought refuge in a church, he put him to death, as well as the bishop who had granted him asylum. He destroyed by horrible tortures all those whom he accused of participating in his brother's treason, and caused his authority again to be acknowledged throughout the army of the Burgundians.

Clovis, in the mean time, had not been making conquests; possibly, this was not his object; but he had been enriching his army. At the end of a few years, he led it forth on another expedition. Alaric II. reigned over the Visigoths, and between him and the Franks there had been some disputes. Clovis proposed to him to hold a conference in an island on the Loire, near Amboise: here he settled all their differences, removed all Alaric's anxiety about his own projects, and a lasting peace was confirmed between the Visigoths and the Franks by mutual oaths. On his return home, he assembled his troops on the Champ de Mars, between Soissons and Paris, in the spring of the year 507.

"I cannot bear," he said, "that those Arians (the Visigoths) should possess the best part of Gaul: let us go forth against them, and when, by God's help, we have overcome them, we will reduce their country under our dominion, and their persons to slavery." A longer harangue was not required to excite the Franks to warfare. They made the air resound with the clang of their arms, and followed their king to the field.

Clovis had deceived his enemy by a shameful perjury; but, in order to gain the blessing of Heaven upon his arms, he caused it

to be proclaimed that any soldier would be punished with death who should carry off so much as a blade of grass from the territory of Tours without paying for it, this country being under the immediate protection of St. Martin. The church, at that time, did not hesitate between the two kinds of merit—liberality toward monks, or probity. St. Gregory of Tours assures us that the march of Clovis was constantly directed and aided by miracles. The perpetual chorus of monks,—the *Psallentium*,—who, night and day, sang psalms in the church of Tours, announced his victory by a prophecy. A fawn guided his passage across the waters of the Vienne; a column of fire led his army on to Poitiers. At the distance of ten leagues from this city, Clovis encountered the Visigoths, commanded by Alaric II. He vanquished them in the plains of Vouglé, (A. D. 507;) their king was killed, and their whole army routed. The greater part of the territory of the Visigoths, between the Loire and the Pyrennees, was ravaged by the Franks, who spent a considerable time in conquering these provinces; but during a four years' war, of which we have no details, they lost a part of what they had gained, and at the end of the reign of Clovis, in 511, his authority was acknowledged by little more than the half of Aquitaine.

The other Frankic kings could certainly no longer be considered as the equals of Clovis; some of them had, indeed, fought by his side, but not one had discovered the talents of a great general, or a great politician. All of them had given themselves up to that effeminacy which so rapidly corrupts uncivilized man in affluence. Nevertheless, Clovis still regarded them as rivals; he feared the inconstancy of the people, who might at some future time seek among the other kings a protector against himself; and he dreaded the development of talents dangerous to his power in them or their children, or the comparison that might be made between their mildness and his own cruelty. He, therefore, came to the resolution of getting rid of them, and began with Siegbert, king of the Ripuarians, his companion in arms, who reigned at Cologne. In the year 509, he persuaded Chlodoric, the son of this unfortunate king, who had accompanied him in his war against the Visigoths, to assassinate his father; promising that he would afterwards assist him to reap the fruits of his parricide. The crime was committed; but Clovis made no attempt to screen the perpetrator, whom he caused to be assassinated in his turn; and immediately assembled the Ripuarians,

who raised him upon a shield and proclaimed him their king. Shortly after, Clovis laid snares for Cararic, who reigned at Terouane. Having obtained possession of his person, he compelled him and his son to assume holy orders, after which he cut off both their heads. He seduced the *Leudes* of Ragnacar, who reigned at Cambray, by presents; and having commanded him and his brother to be brought before him in chains, "Art thou not ashamed," said he, "of disgracing our descent by allowing thyself to be thus manacled? thou oughtest to have died honourably." Then raising his arm, with one blow of his axe he cut off his head. "And as for thee," said he to the brother of Ragnacar, hadst thou defended thy brother, thou wouldst not now be a captive with him." And immediately, by a mortal blow, he laid him prostrate in his turn. He also procured the death of several other long-haired kings who reigned over smaller tribes; then pretending to repent of his barbarity, he offered his protection to all those who had escaped the massacre. He hoped thus to discover any of his relations whose lives might have been preserved, that he might rid himself of them also: but they had all perished, and his work was accomplished. So says St. Gregory, from whom we have borrowed the history of all these horrors; and whose sentiments, even better than his narrative, portray the spirit of the age he lived in. "Thus did God every day cause some among his enemies to fall into his hands, and increased the limits of his kingdom; because he walked with an upright heart before the Lord, and did that which was pleasing in his sight." (B. ii. c. 40.)

There can be no doubt that, by the larger part of the clergy of Gaul, Clovis was considered a saint. His success was attributed to a succession of miracles, which enabled him to lay the foundation of the French monarchy: one of these, more famous than the rest, has been commemorated ever since, at the consecration of the kings of France. It was asserted that a phial, called *La Sainte Ampoule*, was brought from heaven by a white dove to St. Remi, and contained the holy oil with which he was to anoint the king. This story, however, did not gain much credit until the ninth century. Nothing could exceed the respect and deference which Clovis testified on all occasions for the clergy, in return for the zeal with which they espoused his cause. We learn, from letters which have been preserved in the collection of the councils, that, in every country which was the seat of war, he

had taken under his special protection not only the persons and property of bishops and priests, but even of their mistresses and their children. He had freed the property of the church from every kind of tax, and had consulted the ecclesiastical council upon the administration of his kingdom.

We should fall into a great error, if we compared this administration with any of those which exist in modern monarchies. Clovis reigned without any ministry, or civil establishment: he was not the king of Gaul, but king of the Franks who dwelt in Gaul. He was the captain of a sovereign army, both by choice and by inheritance; for, on the one hand, none but a descendant of Merovæus would have been exalted by the soldiers to this high dignity; and, on the other, they would not have intrusted their lives and fortunes to any but the most able and fortunate of the royal line. If Clovis had appeared not to justify their choice, his head would soon have fallen under the francisque, like those of the kings whom he had removed out of his way. This sovereign army, by whose aid he reigned, very much as the dey of Algiers reigned among the janissaries, never quitted arms for agriculture. They had not taken possession of the estates or the persons of the Gauls: for, by spreading themselves over a large territory, they would have been lost; they kept together, or, at least, their cantonments were always in the neighbourhood of Paris or of Soissons, according as the residence of Clovis was in one or the other of these cities. The soldiers were generally quartered upon the citizens: they lived in the enjoyment of luxury and brutal pleasures, such as barbarians could relish, until the wealth acquired in former expeditions was dissipated, and then urged their king to lead them against some new enemy. As the nation of Franks had never emigrated in a body, like that of the Burgundians and Visigoths, there were no families to be planted, no partitions of land to be made. By degrees only, as the veteran soldier retiring from service asked the grant of some uncultivated spot, the king was called upon to distribute land, and he had always more to give than he found claimants for. Often, indeed, the soldier helped himself, and, with the aid of his francisque, got rid of the proprietor whose dwelling or whose land he coveted: aware that, if he chanced to be pursued and condemned for this murder, the law required nothing but a mulct or wergeld of 100 sols of gold (equal to £50 sterling) for the murder of a Roman landholder.

The army, thus kept together, was summoned to deliberate not only in what was properly called the Champ de Mars, where the review took place at the commencement of spring, but on all public occasions, whether for peace or for war, to make laws, or to pass sentence. The Romans were not admitted to these assemblies; they had no part in the sovereignty; but they had all the resources of court intrigue and flattery; all the places of finance or of correspondence, in which their education and literary acquirements were indispensable; and all offices in the ecclesiastical hierarchy: in each of these different careers they not only preserved, but very often augmented, the fortune they had received from their fathers, and their credit increased so much, that before long they enjoyed the special favour and confidence of the Frankic kings.

The towns continued to be governed by the Roman law, with their *curiæ*, or municipalities. To all those places, however, which had put themselves under his protection, Clovis sent a Frankic officer called *Graf*, or *Grafio*, answering pretty nearly to the Roman *Comes*. He superintended the municipality, collected certain royal dues, and presided over the partial assemblies of the Franks,—the courts where justice was administered when any troop of Franks was settled in a town.

In the rural districts the people remained slaves, as they were before the conquest. They laboured for the proprietor of the estate upon which they happened to live, whether he were Frank or Roman. War had ruined many citizens, and greatly augmented the number of captives: the common lot of prisoners was slavery; and a warlike expedition, crowned with brilliant success, was often the cause of transporting from the banks of the Rhone to those of the Seine whole droves of unhappy beings destined to work for any masters who might become their purchasers.

“After having done all these things,” continues Gregory of Tours, “Clovis died at Paris on the 5th of November, 511. He was buried in the church of the Holy Apostles, now called Ste. G  n  vi  ve; which, in concert with queen Chlotilde, he had founded. He had reigned in all thirty years,—five since the battle of the Vougl  ; and had completed the forty-fifth year of his age.”

CHAPTER IX.

Course of barbaric Invasion from East to West.—The Eastern Empire, by mere good Fortune, survives the Western.—Emperors of the East.—Persian Kings.—Ostrogoths.—Their King Dietrich, commonly called Theodoric; his Education at the Court of Zeno.—His Conquest of Italy.—His Wisdom and Moderation.—Restored Prosperity of Italy under his Rule.—Religious Toleration.—Extent of his Territory.—Letters of his Secretary Cassiodorus.—His War with Clovis.—His Death.—His unworthy Successors.—Aggrandizement of the Franks, the most barbarous and the most powerful of the German Nations.—Incorporation of other Tribes with them.—Conquest of the Thuringians.—Reigns of the four Sons of Clovis; Thierry, Chlothaire, Childebert, and Theodebert.—Conquest of Burgundy.—Gondebald.—Atrocities of the Frankic Kings.—Death of Chlothaire.—A. D. 493—561.

THE torrent of barbaric invasion had rolled its waves from the East to the West: it had received its first impulse in Scythia, whence it had followed the shores of the Black Sea, and laid waste that enormous Illyrian isthmus, on the coast of which the new city of Constantine was built. Almost all the tribes which had conquered the West, had previously vented their fury upon the empire of the East: Goths of every denomination, Vandals, Alans, and Huns: nevertheless, the Eastern empire survived the tempest, while that of the West perished in it. The former was, certainly, not more warlike than the latter, nor better governed, nor more peopled, nor more wealthy; it had no glorious recollections of the past to recall, and it contained no sparks of ancient patriotism which a virtuous administration might have rekindled. The senate of Constantinople, an imperfect copy of that of Rome, was always despicable and timid. The character of the great was as servile as that of the people. The emperors assumed the haughty language of despotism, and, though they professed Christianity, they continued to accept worship offered to them as divinities. The ambassadors of Theodosius II. engaged in a violent dispute with the ministers of Attila, at the very time when they were about to supplicate for peace at the feet of that monarch, declaring that it was impious to compare Attila, who was only a man, with their emperor Theodosius, who was a god. If we compare the Greeks of the fifth century, who

maintained their existence, with the Romans, who forfeited theirs, we shall find them to have been superior neither in talents, nor in virtue, nor in energy, but simply more fortunate.

After the extinction of the race of the great Theodosius, (A. D. 450,) the throne of Constantinople was occupied, during a period of seventy-seven years, by five emperors, down to the time of Justinian:—Marcian, (A. D. 450—457;) Leo, till 474; Zeno, till 491; Anastasius, till 518; and Justin, till 527. These were almost all men advanced in age, equally feeble in mind and in body, and raised to the throne by women who governed in their names. History has but little to record of them. We have, probably, lost some contemporary writers, but the little we know of these five reigns leaves us no reason to regret that we do not know more. Thrace and the European part of the empire were exposed to frequent ravages during these seventy-seven years; but the extensive provinces of Asia, Egypt, and the Greek islands, suffered only from the vices of the government. These vast regions could scarcely be attacked, except from the frontier of the Euphrates; and, as the government of the Sassanides, in Persia, was characterized by an equal degree of pusillanimity, the two empires remained at peace with one another. The kings of Persia, Ferouz, (A. D. 457—488;) Balasch, 491; Xobad, 531, are only known to us by name: they were engaged in dangerous wars with the White Huns, or Euthalites, to the north and east of the Caspian Sea, which left them no leisure to turn their arms against the Romans.

But, in the mean time, a new people started from the frontiers of the Eastern empire, to fall upon the provinces which had belonged to the empire of the West, and to effect another change in their condition. The conquest of Italy by the Ostrogoths was connected with the reigns of the emperors Zeno and Anastasius, and was partly the result of their suggestions.

Whilst a portion of the nation of the Goths, which had inhabited the western regions, and were called Visigoths, (*Westgothen*,) had boldly entered the territory of the empire, and had, at length, found an abode in part of Gaul and in Spain; the Goths of the East, or Ostrogoths, (*Ostgothen*,) still remained beyond the Danube. They had submitted to Attila, but as they had neither treasures nor cities to pillage, and nothing to offer to their new masters but brave soldiers, they were soon incorporated into the Tartar's army, and honoured by the name of his

subjects. Three brothers, who were kings amongst the Ostrogoths, Walamir, Theodemir, and Widimir, had followed Attila in his expeditions against Thrace, and afterwards against Gaul. After the death of the king of the Huns, they had no difficulty in recovering their independence. They occupied, at that time, the desolate plains of Pannonia (Austria and Hungary.) The impulse they had received from the Huns, the wars in which they had been engaged, and the rapid marches they had effected across Europe, had induced them to abandon the arts of agriculture. The habits of indolence and prodigality which they had contracted in the rich provinces they had laid waste, unfitted them to resume a life of industry; so that, in the rich lands of Hungary, where the slightest cultivation is rewarded by the most abundant crops, a nation, less numerous than the population of any one of the cities they had destroyed there, or which exist there at the present time, was constantly in dread of famine. Their cupidity was goaded by their privations: the more they suffered, the more they oppressed the few wretched inhabitants who remained in these vast regions: they destroyed the last remnants of the race, and, after having consumed the substance of the husbandmen who were their subjects, they relapsed into their former misery.

Theodoric, the son of Theodemir, one of the three brothers, had been given to the emperor Zeno as a hostage, and brought up at Constantinople. The example of that great empire, which still enjoyed immense wealth, and exercised the most valuable of the arts, was not lost upon him. His mind, open to instruction, did not fail to profit by whatever was still to be learned amongst the Romans in the arts of war and administration; he did not choose, however, to submit to Greek pedagogues, but educated himself, and would not even be taught to write. About the year 475, he succeeded his father, and, as his two uncles were already dead, he was then chief of the whole Ostrogothic nation. He hastened to rescue his countrymen from the miseries they were suffering in the deserts of Pannonia. He invaded the empire of the East, and terrified Zeno into a purchase of his friendship. He rendered many important services to the emperor in the revolts which troubled his reign; but afterwards, being provoked by some instance of bad faith, or urged by the mere inconstancy and impatience of his soldiers, he again turned his arms against the empire, and ravaged Thrace with a cruelty

which has left a stain upon his memory. It was said, that, in this expedition, the Goths cut off the right hands of the peasants they took prisoners, in order to prevent them from holding the handle of the plough.

Theodoric could not live in peace, and Zeno, his adversary, was at a loss for a pretext for terminating a war which he was unable to carry on. At this juncture, the king of the Ostrogoths proposed to the emperor of Byzantium a negotiation by which he should be authorized to conquer Italy, and to govern it according to the laws, if not in the dependence, of the empire. Zeno was delighted to deliver himself from so formidable an enemy at any price; he therefore abandoned Odoacer to the arms of the Ostrogoths, and in the treaty which he finally concluded with the king his vassal, expressions were introduced sufficiently ambiguous to save the dignity of the empire, without compromising the independence of Theodoric. The army of the Ostrogoths, and with it the entire nation, left Thrace at the beginning of the campaign of 489, intending to cross Mœsia, Pannonia, and the Julian Alps, in order to enter Italy.

Wandering tribes of Bulgarians, Gepidæ, and Sarmatians, occupied these regions, which had once been opulent and populous. The Ostrogoths were sometimes obliged to maintain a running fight with them during a march of 700 miles; but in other parts they were joined by numerous adventurers, attracted by the fame of Theodoric to serve under his banner. When this formidable army descended the Alps of Friuli, Odoacer showed himself to be nowise inferior to his reputation for activity, skill, and bravery. He defended Italy better than it had been defended for ages: but, after having lost three pitched battles, he was obliged to quit the open country, and to take refuge, with his most faithful partisans, in the fortress of Ravenna, where he stood a siege of three years. He was, at length, obliged to surrender, on the 5th of March, 493; the conditions he obtained were honourable and advantageous, but he soon learned that good faith in treaties was a virtue scarcely known amongst barbarians. The chiefs themselves rarely hesitated between their interests and their engagements, at a time when public opinion was without force, and public morality without principle. Theodoric, who may be looked upon as the most loyal and the most virtuous of these barbarian conquerors, caused Odoacer to be assassinated at the close of a banquet of reconciliation.

The king of the Ostrogoths, when he had conquered Italy, soon rendered himself master of the territory lying between the Danube and the Alps, which formed the outworks of the country he governed. He also obtained from the Vandals the restitution of Sicily, by the terror of his name alone. He then proceeded to establish the wisest and most equitable institutions which any northern conqueror had ever granted to the conquered countries of the south. Instead of oppressing one people by means of the other, he strove to hold the balance fairly between them, and to preserve, or even to augment, the distinct privileges of each. He consolidated the entire structure of the Germanic liberties of the Goths; their popular judicial proceedings; their laws of Scandinavian origin; their institutions, at once civil and military, which assembled the citizens of the same districts, to deliberate or to judge in time of peace, and to take the field together in time of war. He confided the defence of the state to them exclusively, and, towards the close of his life, he went so far as to prohibit the Romans from wearing arms, (which they showed little eagerness to use,) and to allow them only to the barbarians. At the same time, he attempted to introduce the practice of agriculture among the Ostrogoths, by giving them lands, which they held on the ancient German tenure of military service. There were deserted estates in Italy, at that time, sufficient to have maintained thirty or forty thousand new families, and it is not to be doubted that Theodoric had brought as many with him: but these warriors had so far lost the habit of labour, that they could not submit to the task of bringing waste lands into cultivation; they were, therefore, allowed to choose out of the estates of the Romans, with the restriction, that no Roman citizen was to lose more than the third of his inheritance. It is also possible (for the expressions of Procopius on this head are somewhat ambiguous) that he imposed on the Roman husbandman the obligation of handing over to his barbarian master one-third of his crop; in which case we must ascribe to Theodoric the merit of having restored that system of *partiairy* or *métayer* husbandry to which Italy owes the prosperity of its agricultural population. As legislator, he made great efforts to unite in the Ostrogoth the domestic habits of the cultivator, with the exercises and discipline of the soldier. His wish was to instruct his subjects in the arts, but not in the science or literature of the Romans, "for," said he, "he who has trembled at the rod of a tutor, will always tremble at the sight of a sword."

Theodoric indulged his Roman subjects in what they called their liberties; that is to say, the names of the republic, the senate, the consuls, and the magistracy; in their laws, language, and dress. He was sufficiently acquainted with the constitution of the empire, to perceive the great advantages he might derive from this state of things. The Romans would pay taxes, whilst the Goths would remain free from contributions; and he could not fail to discern the security he might gain from their settled obedience, and their great superiority over the Goths in the science of administration, in foreign correspondence, and in diplomacy. With the aid of Roman industry, fostered by the protection of just laws, and by the activity of a great mind, he worked some ancient gold and iron mines in Pannonia and Istria; he encouraged improvements in agriculture; he commenced the draining of the Pontine Marshes; restored the spirit of commerce and manufactures, and re-established the imperial posts, which were then exclusively destined to the convenience of the government, and of such as could obtain gratuitous orders for horses. In the year 500, during a visit he made to the city of Rome, where he received the compliments of the senate and the people, he assigned an annual revenue for the preservation of the Roman monuments from the depredations of builders, who already looked upon them as quarries which were to furnish materials for new edifices. He even re-established, on a less lavish, but still on an expensive scale, the distributions of food to the Roman people, and those public sports which were not less dear to them than bread. He did not, however, take up his residence in the ancient capital; but divided his time between Ravenna, the most important fortress of his kingdom, his great arsenal and store-house, and Verona, the city of his choice, and that from which he was best enabled to provide for the defence of Italy. Thence it is, that, in the *Nibelungen Lied*, the most ancient German poem, he is designated as Dietrich von Berne, which must be translated Theodoric of Verona, since Bern was not then in existence. Although he had been brought up in the Arian faith, Theodoric granted perfect toleration to the catholics, and even acceded to the wishes of their clergy, in forbidding any but the catholic religion amongst his conquered subjects. He distributed rewards and benefices to the clergy with such judgment and address, that they remained obedient and faithful to him till nearly the close of his life. He had intended to restore the glory of the

Roman senate, and to attach it to his monarchy: his success was complete at the beginning of his reign, but the men whom he imagined he had secured, eluded him towards the end of it. The bishops and senators, deceived by the attentions he paid them, thought themselves more important and more formidable than they really were. The senators were still distinguished by their immense wealth; they dwelt upon the antiquity of their race, with a degree of pride which seemed to increase as the chances of raising its dignity by illustrious actions diminished. They still believed themselves to be ancient Romans, not only the descendants, but the equals, of the masters of the world: they dreamed of liberty without equality, public strength or courage; and they entered into obscure conspiracies, to restore, not the republic, but the empire. Theodoric, who had become irritable by prosperity and suspicious by age, punished these men, whom he accused of treacherous plans and intentions, more, perhaps, on suspicion, than on any proof of real guilt. The end of his reign was sullied by the condemnation of Boethius and Symmachus, both of whom were senators, men of consular dignity, and eminently fitted to do honour to the last age of Rome. Boethius languished for a long time in his prison at Pavia: before he perished by a cruel death, he composed his work, "*De Consolatione Philosophiæ*," which is still read with pleasure. It is said that Theodoric, exasperated by the persecution of the Arians at Constantinople, was about to set on foot a persecution of the catholics in Italy, when he died, on the 30th of August, 526.

During a reign of thirty-three years Theodoric carried on several successful wars, by means of his generals: he repelled the attacks of the Greeks, of various barbaric tribes from the Danube, of the Burgundians, and of the Franks. He was, however, less solicitous for the extension of his monarchy by conquest, than for its internal prosperity. The population of his kingdom rapidly increased, thanks to the long peace it enjoyed, to the wise laws which he had promulgated, and to the immense resources of a country which had been thus regenerated by the barbarians, and in which every kind of labour ensured an ample recompense. At the close of his reign the nation of the Ostrogoths was computed to possess 200,000 men capable of bearing arms, which supposes a total population of nearly 1,000,000; we must not, however, forget that it had been recruited by the soldiers and adventurers of all the barbarous nations who flocked to

share the riches and the glory with which Theodoric loaded it. It then occupied not only Sicily and Italy, but the provinces of Rhætia and Noricum to the Danube, Istria on the other side of the Adriatic, and the south of Gaul to the Rhone. We have no positive information as to the Roman population of these territories at the same time, but there is reason to believe that it was also considerably increased.

The negotiations of Theodoric extended throughout Germany, and even to Sweden, whence his countrymen originally came, and whence he constantly received fresh emigrants. The voluminous collection of the letters of his secretary Cassiodorus has been preserved; and although the truth often lies hid under the pompous style, cumbrous metaphors, or pedantic erudition of that rhetorician, these twelve books furnish us with many precious documents relating to the internal administration of the country, the manners of the age, and the diplomatic relations of the new states: it is worthy of note that the Latin language was employed in these last communications by nations who did not understand it themselves. We find letters addressed by Cassiodorus in the name of Theodoric to the kings of the Warnes, of the Heruli, and of the Thuringians, who were all completely barbarous, and who lived beyond the Danube, begging them to interest themselves, as well as the king of the Burgundians, in the defence of his son-in-law Alaric II. against Clovis. These kings had been compelled to acknowledge the advantages of letters, and of the means of communication which they afforded to men separated by enormous distances, although united by the same interests; but, as their language had no alphabet, and neither they nor any one else could write it, they took Roman slaves as secretaries, and frequently maintained a correspondence in a language which was equally unknown to both parties.

Theodoric, who had obliged the Burgundians to cede a great portion of Provence and the town of Arles, in which he had established a prefect of Gaul in imitation of the prefecture under the empire, had endeavoured to protect his son-in-law Alaric II., king of the Visigoths in Spain and Aquitaine, whose territories adjoined his own at the mouth of the Rhone. Deceived as much as his young ally, by the oaths of Clovis, he was unable to prevent the battle of Vouglé and the ruin of the Visigoths in Aquitaine, but he lost no time in sending them assistance. A natural son of Alaric, who was of age to bear arms, had been placed

upon the throne during the infancy of Amalaric, his legitimate son by the daughter of Theodoric; however valid this motive might appear to the nation, it did not satisfy the king of the Ostrogoths, who immediately caused his grandson to be crowned, and assumed the government of Spain and of the south of France as his guardian. Amalaric, in the mean while, established his residence at Narbonne; the lustre of his court, and of the officers who attended him, served to remind the Visigoths that they were still an independent nation; while the continued advantages with which they carried on a border war against the Franks, attached them to the powerful protector who maintained the glory of their monarchy.

If Theodoric had had a son to whom he might have transmitted the dominion over so large a portion of Europe, the Goths would probably have had the honour of restoring the empire of the West; but fortune, who had conferred more true greatness on this prince than on any other barbaric monarch, refused him a male heir, and had granted him only two daughters. He died on the 30th of August, 526, and his reign passed like a brilliant meteor, which disappears without exercising any permanent influence on the seasons. The two nations of the Visigoths and Ostrogoths, which he had united, were again divided at his death. Amalaric, who was then twenty-five or twenty-six years old, remained at Narbonne, whence he governed Spain, and that part of Gaul which lies between the Rhone, the Loth, and the Pyrenees. Athalaric, the grandson of Theodoric, then only four or five years old, remained at Ravenna under the guardianship of his mother Amalasonta, at the head of the Ostrogoths in Italy and Provence.

As corruption advances with more rapid strides among barbarians than among civilized nations, so also does their ruin. Their virtues are owing to position rather than to principle: they are sober, valiant, and active, because they are poor and hardy from their infancy. Physical pleasure is all that wealth can give them; they are unable to share the intellectual enjoyments of civilized men, so that, to them, opulence is the source of every vice. The plan of this work does not compel us to enter into these infamous details; suffice it to say, that from the death of the great Theodoric, to the reign of Athanagild, who transferred the seat of monarchy to Toledo, (A. D. 526—554,) four kings successively occupied the throne: Amalaric reigned from 526 to 531; Then-

dis died in 548; Thendisdi in 549, and Agila in 554. Each was assassinated by the hand of his successor. In Italy seven kings of the Ostrogoths succeeded Theodoric, till the destruction of that monarchy by Belisarius in 554: Athalaric reigned from 526 to 534, Theodatus to 536, Vitiges to 540, Hildebald 541, Evaria 541, Totila 552, and Teja 554. The fate of these monarchs was scarcely less tragical than that of their contemporaries in Gaul: but we shall have occasion to recur to them, in speaking of the conquests of Justinian, in a subsequent chapter. We shall, at the same time, witness the fall of the Vandals in Africa: we are about to record that of the Burgundians in Gaul. No ray of light enables us as yet to discern the history of the internal revolutions of Great Britain or of Germany, so that, after the death of Theodoric, all the interest of the West centres in the history of the Franks.

The sudden rise of the monarchy of the Franks is the more remarkable, as, from the death of Clovis, that nation was distinguished neither by the virtues or talents of its chiefs, nor by its own merits. At the time of the conquest of Gaul, the Franks were the most barbarous of the barbarians, and they long remained so: they manifested an extreme contempt for the people they had subdued, and treated them with excessive rigour. The Visigoths had adopted a pretty copious selection from the code of Theodosius (which was then the law of the empire) as the law of their monarchy: the Ostrogoths had promulgated laws of their own, which were not entirely dissimilar from those of the Roman republic, and which attested the importance they attached to legal science, and to the administration of justice. The Burgundians, more rude than the Goths, had retained their national laws, which were, certainly, less polished than the preceding codes, but equitable in spirit, and equally just to the conquerors and the conquered. The Franks published their laws, which were the most barbarous of all. The penal code of the Germanic nations reduced itself to a scale of fines: every offence might be atoned for by a pecuniary compensation: *wehrgeld* was the money of defence, *wiedergeld* the money of compensation. But the Franks, both Salian and Ripuan, were the only people who valued the blood of a Roman, at half, or even less than half, the value of the blood of a barbarian. Murder, and every other crime, was punished in the same proportion. This public insult, offered by the legislature to the conquered people, was of a piece

with the rest of their conduct. They despised the learning of the Latins, as well as their language, their arts, and their sciences: as governors, the Franks were violent, brutal, and pitiless: their respect for the priests alone contributed to render their yoke supportable. Their high veneration for the church, and their rigorous orthodoxy, which was the more easily preserved, as they were entirely ignorant of the disputes and controversies which had arisen on matters of faith, induced the clergy to look upon them as their firmest allies. They were ever ready to detest, to combat, and to pillage the Arians, without listening to their arguments. The bishops, in their turn, were not very strict in enforcing the moral obligations of religion: they shut their eyes upon violence, murder, and licentiousness; they even seem to have publicly authorized polygamy, and they preached the divine right of kings, and the duty of passive obedience. The Franks were, however, brave, numerous,—for their population had increased rapidly in Gaul,—well armed, tolerably well versed in the ancient Roman discipline, from their long service in the imperial armies, and almost always victorious in battle. The ties that united them were so lax, their obedience to the king and to the law so voluntary, their freedom from pecuniary and social obligations so complete, that no barbarian thought he forfeited any of his national privileges by entering into their community. On the other hand, the Franks, who, at their first establishment on the other side of the Rhine, had been composed of a confederation of several small nations, were familiar with the idea of admitting new confederates: all they asked of their associates was to march under the same standard in time of war: they did not interfere with their internal constitution; they appointed no governor; they did not dismiss their dukes or hereditary kings, and, without claiming from them forced subsidies of men or of money, they admitted them to participation in their glory and their power. In this manner the whole of Germany, without having been conquered, became engaged in the Frankic confederation in the course of that half century which comprised the reigns of the four sons of Clovis. (A. D. 511—561.)

The kingdom of Clovis, which had been founded by soldiers of fortune in some of the towns of Belgium, was bounded by the Rhine. His tribe consisted of Salians, and, perhaps, of Sicambrians, also, though it is not at all certain, that other Salians, independent of Clovis, did not remain in their former settle-

ments on the right bank of the Rhine. The Chauci, the Cherusci, and the Chamavi, are not mentioned in the history of his reign, any more than the other ancient Franks who belonged to the primitive confederation. They had all retained their independence in a part of Germany which is still called Frankenland (Franconia,) after them; but, in the following half century, they gladly entered into a new confederation, which, without abridging their rights, promised to ensure them many new advantages. Beyond the Franks of the Rhine, and of Franconia, dwelt the Frisons on the shores of the ocean, and the Saxons at the mouth of the Elbe: both these nations began to call themselves Franks, or, at least, to march with the Frankic armies, at the beginning of the sixth century. The Alemanni, or Swabians, from the sources of the Rhine, and the Bavarians, on the banks of the Danube, contracted the same pacific engagements, without, in any way, changing their respective institutions; except that their sovereigns probably abandoned the title of king to Clovis, and assumed that of Duke. The Thuringians alone were subdued by force of arms. They had laid the foundation of a powerful monarchy from the banks of the Elbe and the Unstrut to those of the Neckar: they had allied themselves with the Varnes and the Heruli; and they had a long rivalry of glory to decide, as well as a long list of grievances to redress, with the Franks. The Thuringian war is believed to have occurred in the years 528 and 530. The sons of Clovis took advantage of the dissensions of his chiefs, and of those royal fratricides which stain the annals of all the monarchies of that age, to attack this nation. Three brothers governed the Thuringians—Baderic, Hermanfrid, and Berthar; they were recent converts to Christianity, and Hermanfrid had married a niece of the great Theodoric, king of Italy. This princess, who was accustomed to the Gothic order of succession, according to primogeniture, upbraided her husband for consenting to occupy a divided throne. Hermanfrid came one day into the banquet hall, where he found the table partly uncovered: when he asked his wife the cause, she said, “You complain of having only half a table, and you submit quietly to having only half a kingdom.” Hermanfrid felt this reproach: to satisfy his wife, he surprised and assassinated his brother Berthar: he afterwards concerted the death of Baderic with Thierry, one of the sons of Clovis; but, as he refused to pay this prince the recompense he had promised, war

was declared, in which Hermanfrid perished with his whole family; not, however, in battle, but by treachery, in a conference with his enemy.

We have advanced in this history without mentioning the names of the new kings of the Franks; it is, indeed, repulsive to dwell upon the lives of princes whose annals are one tissue of perfidy and of crime. Clovis was succeeded by his four sons—Thierry, Chlodomir, Childebert, and Chlothaire; the eldest of whom was twenty-five, the youngest thirteen or fourteen years old. All four were distinguished by their regal length of hair, and all bore the title of king, but they lived in four distinct, though not very distant towns,—Paris, Orleans, Soissons, and Metz,—in order to enjoy the pleasures of the throne without restraint, and to be more secure from the poison or the dagger each dreaded from the other. The monarchy, however, was not divided, though the royalty was; the Franks still formed one nation. In time of peace, the kings took so little part in the government, that the division of the royal power was unperceived by their subjects: in war, each had his own *leudes* or warriors, immediately depending upon his personal favour; while, in their more important expeditions, the Franks followed the king in whom they had the greatest confidence. The provinces were divided amongst the brothers, but, in so strange a manner, that it is evident the convenience of government was not the object they had in view. The division applied more to the tribute of the Roman towns, and to the productions of the soil, than to the territory itself: each prince chose to have his share in the vines and olives of the south, as well as in the forest or pasture lands of the north; and their possessions were so intermingled throughout Gaul, that it was impossible to travel for ten leagues without passing a frontier.

The lives of the four brothers were not of equal duration. Thierry, the eldest, who was not a son of Chlotilde, but of a concubine, or pagan mistress of Clovis, died in 534; he was succeeded by his son Theodebert, who died in 547, and was followed by Theodebald, his son, who died in 553 without issue. Chlodomir, the second of the Frankic kings, was slain in the Burgundian war in 526. Childebert, the third, died in 558; and Chlothaire, who survived his brothers, inherited all their possessions, and reigned over the Franks till 561. It would be difficult and useless to fix this list of deaths in the memory: the go-

vernment of the four sons of Clovis properly forms but one reign, which lasted from 511 to 561. These four princes laid snares for each other, but they never broke out into open hostility. We shall shortly see that they were far from sparing of the blood of their kindred, but they probably thought that the Franks would refuse to make war upon each other. They had but few opportunities of displaying their military talents: they, however, made some warlike expeditions; Thierry and Chlothaire in Thuringia, Childebert in Narbonnensian Gaul, and Theodebert in Italy: they thus enriched their soldiers with booty, and kept up the reputation of the valour of their nation.

The bravery of the Franks was more frequently called into action in numerous voluntary expeditions, undertaken by soldiers of fortune under captains of their own choice, in order to share the spoils of Italy, which was at that time the theatre of war between Belisarius, the general of Justinian, and the Ostrogoths. These partial expeditions would have had no consequence more important than the success, or the untimely death, of individual warriors, had not the Ostrogoths surrendered the occupation of Provence, by which means that important part of Gaul was added to the empire of the Franks. A still more brilliant acquisition was that of Burgundy, which was the consequence of a national war, and of a family quarrel.

Gondebald, king of the Burgundians, who had massacred his three brothers, continued to reign alone over that nation from the year 500 to 516. St. Avitus, archbishop of Vienne, his subject, exhorted him, in a letter which is still extant, to calm his remorse for this fratricide; he conjured him "to weep no longer with such ineffable piety the death of his brothers, since it was the good fortune of the kingdom which diminished the number of persons invested with royal authority, and preserved to the world such only as were necessary to rule it." Gondebald, from the time of the commission of this crime, governed with great wisdom and justice: he protected his Roman subjects, and ensured the future observance of their rights. When he died, in 516, his son Sigismund succeeded him, after having embraced the orthodox faith, and induced the majority of his subjects to join in his conversion.

Sigismund was canonized by the Roman church, and is to this day revered as a saint. He was the founder of the convent of St. Maurice in the Valais, which he endowed with immense re-

venues: we know nothing of what occurred during his reign of eight years, except this monastic institution, and the precipitation with which he caused his brother Siegeric to be strangled in his sleep, on false suspicions. He lived in peace, fully occupied with what were then called good works, such as acts of penitence, and munificent almsgivings to the monks. St. Chlotilde, the widow of Clovis, who had also retired from the world to devote herself exclusively to the exercises of religion at the tomb of St. Martin at Tours, came to Paris in the year 523, to meet her three sons; and, according to the holy bishop, Gregory of Tours, she addressed them to the following effect:—"I exhort you, my dear children, to live so that I may never repent the tenderness with which I have brought you up; to resent with indignation the injury which I received thirty-three years ago, and to avenge, with unflinching constancy, the death of my parents." The three sons swore to perform the injunctions of their mother: they attacked the Burgundians, defeated them in battle, secured the person of St. Sigismund, who had already assumed the monastic garb, and was retiring to the convent of St. Maurice: after keeping him some time prisoner, Chlodomer caused him to be thrown into a well near Orleans, with his wife and his two children. A brother of Sigismund, called Godemar, rallied the fugitive Burgundians, put himself at their head, and repelled the Franks. Chlodomer, who renewed the attack in 524, was killed at the battle of Veserruce. The Franks offered to treat with the Burgundians, and Godemar was allowed to reign in peace for eight years; but in 532 he was again assailed, taken prisoner, and treated as captive kings were treated at that time: the whole of Burgundy was subdued, and thenceforth the Burgundians marched under the standard of the Franks, though they retained their own laws and magistracy.

The revenge of St. Chlotilde was at length accomplished on the children and grandchildren of her enemies; but her satisfaction was imbittered. Chlodomer was killed; and his brother, Chlothaire, though he had already two wives, married his brother's widow, named Gondioca, and sent his three infant children to be brought up by St. Chlotilde. He feared, however, lest these sons of Chlodomer should, at some future time, assert their claim to their father's inheritance; and, accordingly, summoned his brother Chilbert to Paris, to consult with him on their com-

mon interests. They desired their mother to send the three children to them, in order that they might be shown to the people, and proclaimed kings. Chlotilde accordingly sent them with a numerous train of officers, and of young pages who were brought up with them. Arcadius, a senator of Auvergne, and a confidential agent of Childebert, shortly afterwards returned to her with a pair of scissors and a drawn sword, calling upon her to decide the fate of her grandchildren: in a paroxysm of indignation and despair, Chlotilde exclaimed, that "she had rather they should perish, than be shorn and buried alive in a cloister." This answer was construed into assent by her two sons: Chlothaire seized the eldest of the princes, then about ten years old, by the arm, threw him down, and plunged a dagger into his side: the younger child then fell at the feet of Childebert and implored mercy; Childebert, touched by his supplications, with tears in his eyes entreated his brother to stay his hand; but Chlothaire exclaimed furiously, "Thou hast urged me on, and now thou desertest me; give up the boy, or perish in his stead:" on which Childebert flung the suppliant down, and Chlothaire slew him on the ground. All the pages and attendants were massacred at the same time, and Childebert divided the inheritance of Chlodomer with his surviving brother. Chlodoald, the youngest of these unhappy children, escaped the pursuit of his uncles: for a long time he remained in concealment; when he was grown up he cut off his hair with his own hands, and assumed the monkish garb: returning to France after the death of Chlothaire, he built the monastery of St. Cloud, which bears his name.

After recording the crimes of the early kings of the Franks, we long to hear that speedy vengeance overtook them; but this was too rarely the case. Nations are quickly chastised for their vices and their crimes; for them, morality is indetical with good policy; but individuals, of whose existence we see but the beginning, await a different retribution. The powerful frequently find means to hush the upbraidings of conscience, of public opinion, and of posterity. Childebert and Chlothaire had risen above the scruples of remorse; they were assisted in recovering their tranquillity of mind by the assurances of the monks, whom they loaded with wealth. "When," says Chlothaire in the diploma which was given to the convent of Riom in 516, "we listen with a devout soul to the supplications of our priests, as to what regards

the advantage of the churches, we are certain that Jesus Christ will remunerate us for all the good we do them.”* Such was the Christianity which was taught to Chlothaire, and such the confidence in which he was educated, whilst his eyes were closed to the atrocity of the murders we have seen, and are yet to see; and whilst he was allowed to marry, at the same time, Rhadegunde, the daughter of the king of the Thuringians whom he had slain, Chemsene, the mother of his son Chramne, Gondioca, the widow of his brother Chlodimir, Wuttrade, the widow of his nephew Theodewald, Ingunde, and Aregunde. It should be mentioned that the bishops objected to his marriage with Wuttrade, and that he was obliged at the end of a few months to give her up to Gariwald duke of Bavaria; but as to the other marriages, the bishop of Tours relates them in the language of the Old Testament:—

“Chlothaire had already espoused Ingunde,” says St. Gregory, “and he loved her alone, when she proffered a request to him, and said, ‘My lord hath done with his servant that which hath seemed good to him, and hath called her to his bed, but now that the kindness of my lord and king be complete, let him listen to the prayer of his handmaiden. Choose, I pray thee, for Aregunde my sister, his servant, a man wise and rich, so that I be not humbled by her alliance, but exalted on the contrary, and that I may serve my lord with greater faithfulness.’ Chlothaire heard what she said, and as he was extremely sensual, he burned with love for Aregunde. He speedily repaired to the country-house where she dwelt, and took her to wife; after this he returned to Ingunde and said, ‘I have provided for that which thou hast sought of me; thou hast asked a husband for thy sister both rich and wise, and I have found no one better than myself; know then that I have married her, and that I would not have thee be displeased thereat.’ Then Ingunde answered; ‘Let my lord do that which is good in his sight, so that his handmaid find favour in the eyes of her king.’”

The end of Chlothaire’s career was worthy of its commencement: after having shared the throne with his brothers for forty-seven years, he survived the last of them three years. Childbert died at Paris in 558, leaving no son; Chlothaire immediately drove his wife and two daughters from the country, and sought

* *Diplom. tom. iv. p. 616.*

to wreak his revenge on his own son Chramne, who had attached himself to Childebart by choice. Chramne took refuge with the Britons in Armorica, a people who had refused to submit to the Franks, and who readily took up arms in defence of the young prince; the Britons were, however, defeated, and Chramne again took to flight. "He had vessels ready upon the sea," continues Gregory of Tours, "but as he tarried to place his wife and his daughters in safety, the soldiers of his father came up with him, and cast him into chains. When this was told to king Chlothaire, he ordered his son to be burnt in fire, together with his wife and daughters: thereupon they were shut up in the hovel of a poor man; Chramne was stretched out and bound upon a bench, with a cloth taken from an altar (*orarium*,) and the house was set on fire, so that he perished in it with his wife and daughters.

"Now when the king Chlothaire had reached the fiftieth year of his reign, he went to the gates of the shrine of St. Martin with very rich presents; and when he came to Tours, at the tomb of that bishop, he confessed all the actions in which he had any negligence to reproach himself with; he lifted up his voice and groaned exceedingly, begging the holy confessor to obtain the mercy of the Lord, and to efface by his intercession whatever might have been sinful in his conduct. After his return, he was hunting one day in the forest of Cuise, when he was attacked by a fever, so that he returned to his palace at Compiègne; being cruelly tormented by the fever, he cried, 'What are we to think of this king of heaven, who kills the kings of earth in this wise?' But he expired in this suffering. His four sons carried his body in great pomp to Soissons, and interred it in the church of St. Médard: he died on the day after the anniversary of that on which his son Chramne had been put to death."

CHAPTER X.

The Reign of Justinian, illustrated by two Historians, Procopius and Agathias, and distinguished for great Men.—Character of Justinian.—His Intolerance.—Abolition of the Schools of Athens; of the Consulate and the Senate of Rome.—Contrast between the Brilliancy and the Calamity of this Period.—Wars with the Bulgarians, Slavonians, and Persians.—Peace with Chosroes II.—Kingdom of the Vandals in Africa, from the Death of Genseric.—African War.—Belisarius.—Taking of Carthage.—Conquest of Africa.—Recall of Belisarius.—The Ostrogoths in Italy, from the Death of Theodoric.—Amalasonta.—Expedition of Belisarius against the Ostrogoths.—Vitiges.—Rome taken and retaken.—Conduct of Justinian to Belisarius.—Incursions of the Franks.—Recall of Belisarius from Italy.—Ruinous Consequences.—Successes of the Ostrogoths under Totila.—Expedition of Belisarius against him.—Defeat of the Goths by Narses.—Last Victory of Belisarius.—Ingratitude of the Emperor.—Death of both.—Justinian as Lawgiver.—A. D. 527—565.

IN the midst of the darkness through which we have groped our way; after having seen the lights of history die out in the East and in the West; after having lost sight of all the historians of Rome, and of the school of rhetoricians and philosophers which had been formed during the reigns of Constantine and of Julian, we are all at once surrounded by a flood of historic light, spreading from the East to the West, and showing how the face of things was changed, when the prince of legislators published that digest of laws which is still used in many of the tribunals of modern Europe. The reign of Justinian, from 527 to 565, is one of the most brilliant periods of the history of the lower empire. It has been celebrated by two Greek writers, Procopius and Agathias, the former of whom, especially, is worthy to tread in the footsteps of the fathers of Grecian history, whom he took for his models. One of the greatest men who ever adorned the annals of the world,—Belisarius, whose virtues and whose talents were alike strangers at the court of Byzantium, and inexplicable in the midst of the universal turpitude and crime,—wrenched from the barbarians both Africa, Sicily, and Italy; provinces in which the foundations of powerful monarchies had been laid, and which seemed to defy the contemptible attacks of the Greeks. A code of laws, acknowledged throughout western Europe, in countries which had never belonged to the empire, or

which had long since thrown off its yoke, though rejected centuries ago by the nations for which it was especially designed, has survived that empire, and has obtained, in our days, the appellation of "written reason." Monuments of art, worthy of admiration, began to rise in Constantinople and in the provinces, after the lapse of two centuries, during which, construction had been utterly at a stand, and nations seemed solely intent upon destroying what existed. The reign of Justinian, from its length, its glory, and its disasters, may, on more than one account, be compared to the reign of Louis XIV., which exceeded it in length, and equalled it in glory and in disaster. The great emperor, like "the great king," was handsome in his person, graceful and dignified in his manners, and impressed all who approached him with a sense of that majesty to which both of them so ardently aspired. Justinian displayed the same sagacity as Louis in choosing his ministers, and in employing them in the career most fitted to their talents. Belisarius, Narses, and many others, whose names, though less celebrated, are not less worthy of renown, gained victories for him which conferred upon the monarch the glory of a conqueror. John of Cappadocia, who was employed to regulate the finances, brought them into perfect order, at the same time that he carried to the highest perfection the art of draining the purse of the subject. Tribonian, to whom he confided the task of legislation, brought to his service his prodigious erudition, his sagacious understanding, and his knowledge of jurisprudence, to which was united all the servility of a courtier, whose object it was to sanction despotism by law. The magnificence of the edifices built by Justinian, which are more remarkable for their splendour than for the purity of their style, exhausted his treasury; and, though these monuments still illustrate his memory, the erection of them was more disastrous to his people than war itself. The fortresses with which he covered his frontiers, and which he built on every side, at an immense expense, could not check the invasions of his enemies in his old age. Justinian was the protector of commerce. For the first time in the history of antiquity, we find a government paying some attention to the science of economy; and though it is extremely doubtful whether the real wealth and happiness of his subjects were increased by the encouragement he gave to manufactures, it must be acknowledged that we owe to him the introduction of the silkworm, the cultivation of the mulberry-tree,

and the fabric of silk, imported from China; and that by his negotiations in Abyssinia and in Sogdiana, he attempted to open a new route for the commerce of India, and to render his subjects independent of Persia. Justinian, believing that kings are more enlightened in matters of faith than the common run of men, determined on establishing his creed throughout the empire. He persecuted all who differed from him, and thus deprived himself of the assistance of many millions of citizens, who took refuge with his enemies, and introduced the arts of Greece amongst them. His reign may be signalized as the fatal epoch at which several of the noblest institutions of antiquity were abolished. He shut the schools of Athens, (A. D. 529,) in which an uninterrupted succession of philosophers, supported by a public stipend, had taught the doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and Epicurus, ever since the time of the Antonines. They were, it is true, still attached to paganism, and even to the arts of magic. In 541, he abolished the titular consulate of Rome, which was become an office of ruinous expense, from the magnificence of the games which those who held it thought themselves obliged to give to the people. These pageants frequently cost each candidate a sum of 80,000*l.* sterling. In a few years afterwards, (about 552,) the senate of Rome also ceased to exist. The ancient capital of the world was taken and retaken five times during the reign of Justinian, each assault being marked by increased atrocity. It was now completely ruined, and the ancient senatorial families were so thinned by the sword, by want, and by capital punishments, that they no longer attempted to support the dignity of their ancient name.

The brilliant reign of Justinian proves, even more clearly than that of Louis XIV., that a period of glory is seldom one of happiness. Never did a man furnish more brilliant pictures to his panegyrists, who, as they looked but on one side of things, lavished their praises on his extensive conquests, his wise laws, his splendid court, his magnificent edifices, and even on the progress of the useful arts. Never did a man leave a more grievous reverse to be described by the historian, nor the recollection of calamities more general, or more destructive of the human race. Justinian conquered the kingdoms of the Vandals and of the Ostrogoths; but both these nations were in a manner annihilated by their defeat: and before he recovered a province, it was reduced to a desert by the excesses of his armies. He extended the li-

mits of his empire; but he was unable to defend the territory he had received from his predecessors. Every one of the thirty-eight years of his reign was marked by an invasion of the barbarians; and it has been said, that reckoning those who fell by the sword, who perished from want, or were led into captivity, each invasion cost 200,000 subjects to the empire. Calamities, which human prudence is unable to resist, seemed to combine against the Romans, as if to compel them to expiate their ancient glory. Their cities were overwhelmed by earthquakes, more frequent than at any other period of history. Antioch, the metropolis of Asia, was entirely destroyed, on the 20th of May, 526, at the very time when the inhabitants of the adjacent country were assembled to celebrate the festival of the Ascension; and it is affirmed that 250,000 persons were crushed by the fall of its sumptuous edifices. This was the beginning of a scourge, which was renewed at short intervals till the end of that century. The plague was brought from Pelusium, in Egypt, in 542, and attacked the Roman world with such fury, that it did not finally disappear till 594; so that the very period which gave birth to so many monuments of greatness, may be looked back upon with horror, as that of the widest desolation and the most terrific mortality.

Justinian was born in 482 or 483, near Sophia, in modern Bulgaria, or ancient Dardania. He came of a family of common labourers. His uncle Justin, who had enlisted as a private soldier in the guards of the emperor Leo, rose by his valour alone from rank to rank, till he reached the highest dignity of the state. He obtained the purple on the 10th of July, 518, when he was already sixty-eight years of age; but he had long since summoned to his counsels his nephew, to whom he intended to leave his inheritance, and whose talents and activity might sustain his declining years. Four months before his death, on the first of April, 527, Justinian was allowed to share the imperial dignity. He was then forty-five years old: he was well acquainted with the policy of his uncle's court; but though the nephew of a successful soldier of fortune, he was personally unknown to the army, and unaccustomed to actual warfare. After he was seated upon the throne, his advancing years, the etiquette of the court of Byzantium, and the fears his courtiers expressed for his safety, kept him aloof from the army; and though he made war for thirty-eight years, he never put himself at the head of his soldiers.

Justinian was, however, extremely ambitious of military fame, even from the commencement of his reign. The situation of the empire, the dangers which surrounded him, and the menacing attitude of the barbarians upon all his frontiers, made it his duty to adopt the most expeditious means of defence, by restoring the discipline of his troops, by encouraging a warlike spirit among his subjects, and especially by creating an active militia from among the population of his vast territories. The love of a military glory like this would have been no less honourable to the sovereign than advantageous to the subjects of the empire, but such was not the policy Justinian adopted. Like his predecessors, he strictly forbade his citizens to carry arms; and though some few, hoarded in private families, might escape the vigilance of domestic inquisition, every kind of military exercise was positively forbidden the people, by the timidity and jealousy of the emperor; so that, notwithstanding the immense extent of the empire and the dense population of the western provinces, levies of men were rendered almost impossible. The great generals of Justinian undertook their most brilliant expeditions with armies of no more than 20,000 men; and these troops consisted chiefly of enemies to the empire enlisted under its standard. The cavalry and the archers of Belisarius were composed of Scythians or Massagetes, and of Persians; the infantry of Heruli, Vandals, Goths, and a small number of Thracians, who were the only subjects of the empire that retained the slightest military ardour. The citizens and peasants were not only incapable of fighting for life or property in the open field; they dared not even defend the ramparts of cities, the fortresses which the emperor had constructed for them on all the frontiers, nor the long line of walls which covered the Thracian Chersonesus, Thermopylæ, or the isthmus of Corinth. The Bulgarians, who appear to be of Slavonic origin, with a mixture of Tartar blood, took up their abode in the valley of the Danube, where they united themselves to other Slavonians who had always dwelt there, and who had bent, like a reed, beneath the waves of the inundation, and risen again when it had passed over them. These united tribes at length became sufficiently powerful to devastate the empire. They were distinguished neither by their arms, their discipline, nor their military virtues; but they fearlessly crossed the Danube every year to make prisoners and carry off booty; they frequently advanced 300 miles into the country, and Justinian looked upon it as a

victory, when he succeeded in obliging them to retire with their plunder.

Another portion of the empire was threatened by a far more formidable enemy, who had at his disposal numerous armies, immense wealth, and almost all the arts of civilization, though he made war with the atrocious ferocity of a barbarian. The great Chosroes Nushirran, king of Persia, was contemporary with Justinian, and his reign was even longer than that of the emperor. (A. D. 531—579.) When he ascended the throne, hostilities had broken out between the two nations; but his kingdom was enfeebled by civil wars, and by the inroads of the White Huns, so that its need of a peaceful and judicious government was not less urgent than that of the empire. In 531, Chosroes signed a treaty of peace with Justinian, which both monarchs called perpetual; and the Greek emperor, instead of taking advantage of it to strengthen his frontiers against the frequent aggressions of his ancient foes, turned his arms to the conquest of distant provinces, which he could scarcely hope to defend.

The ambitious views of Justinian were first attracted to Africa. Genseric died on the 24th of January, 477, after a reign of thirty-seven years over Carthage. The crown of the Vandals had passed successively to Hunneric, who died in 484, to Gunthamond till 496, and to Thrasamond till 533: these three monarchs were all sons of Genseric, and all zealous enemies of the catholic faith. They carried on the most cruel persecutions in the name of the Arian faith: they are accused of having caused the tongues of a considerable number of bishops to be torn up by the roots; but we are assured by eye-witnesses (not of the punishment but of the miracle) that these prelates continued to preach with greater eloquence than before, without suffering the least inconvenience. In 533, Hilderic, the grandson of Genseric, succeeded his uncle Thrasamond; he recalled the exiled bishops, and during seven years the Roman subjects in Africa lived under a more paternal rule. The Vandals, however, soon regretted the tyranny which they were accustomed to exercise over the nations they had subdued. They accused their monarch of indolence and effeminacy, while they were themselves open to the charge of having too soon yielded to the enervating influence of those sultry regions; the wealth they had acquired by the sabre was dissipated without restraint and without shame; they were constantly surrounded by slaves, like the Mamelukes

of our own times; and though their amusements were all of a martial kind, they delighted in the pomp rather than in the fatigue of warlike exercise. Gelimer, of the royal blood of the Vandals, imbibed their resentment; he headed a conspiracy against Hilderic, threw that prince into a dungeon, and took possession of his throne.

The war of Africa was undertaken by Justinian under pretence of restoring the legitimate succession to the throne, and of delivering Hilderic from prison. The emperor was encouraged in his designs by the state of anarchy in which Africa was plunged. A lieutenant of Gelimer had raised the standard of revolt in Sardinia, and had caused himself to be crowned king: on the other hand, an African Roman had incited his countrymen of Tripoli, in the name of the Athanasian creed, and had raised the banner of the empire. Justinian was encouraged by the prophecies of the orthodox bishops, which all promised him success; and by putting Belisarius at the head of the expedition, he adopted the means most likely to ensure it.

Belisarius, who was born among the peasants of Thrace, had begun his career in the guards of the emperor Justin. He had already distinguished himself in the Persian war, at a juncture of considerable difficulty; after a defeat, for which he was not to blame, he displayed more ability than is usually shown in victory, and saved the army which was intrusted to him. He was about the same age as the emperor, and like him he was governed by his wife; like him, he was faithful to one who was destitute both of the modesty and the gentleness of her sex. Justinian, on his accession, hastened to share the honours of his new dignity with Theodora, the daughter of a charioteer in the public circus, who had united the infamy of a vicious life to the degradation of her father's occupation, until the emperor raised her to the throne. Henceforward her manners were irreproachable; her advice was frequently courageous and energetic; but her cruelty and her avarice contributed to render the emperor odious. Antonina, the wife of Belisarius, was also the daughter of a public charioteer; her conduct had been as irregular as that of the empress, her character was equally firm and audacious: unlike Theodora, however, she did not conquer her early propensities; but, though a faithless wife, she was a faithful friend to her husband. Admitted to the confidence of the empress, she led the way to Belisarius's future greatness, she defended him by her influence, and

maintained him at the head of the army, in spite of the intrigues of his rivals.

Not more than 10,000 foot and 5,000 horse were embarked at Constantinople for the conquest of Africa, under the command of Belisarius, in the month of June, 533. The fleet which conveyed this army was unable to make the whole voyage without taking in provisions; it was received with indiscreet hospitality in a Sicilian port, then dependent on the Ostrogoths. The barbaric kings who had partitioned out the provinces of the Roman empire, would have done well to recollect that their cause was a common one; their means of resistance would then have been far superior to any means of attack possessed by the Greeks: private offences and family quarrels had, however, disturbed their mutual relations; the marriages of kings with the daughters of kings began to exercise their fatal influence, by embroiling those they were intended to unite; so that the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, the Franks, and the Vandals, blindly rejoiced in each other's disasters.

Belisarius landed in September, 533, at *Caput Vadæ*, which is about five days' journey from Carthage. The Vandals were so little prepared for this invasion, that the brother of Gelimer was at that very time with the best troops of the army in Sardinia, where he was endeavouring to quell the insurrection. This circumstance induced Gelimer to avoid a battle for some days. But while he was thus temporizing, he afforded Belisarius an opportunity of impressing the inhabitants of the provinces (the Africans, who were still called Romans,) with a high idea of the discipline of his army, of the liberal protection he was inclined to afford them, and of the mildness of his own character. Belisarius founded his hopes of conquest on the sympathies of the people: he displayed such a paternal benevolence towards these provincials, whom he came to protect and not to subdue; he so carefully respected their rights, and so scrupulously spared their property, that the Africans, who had long been oppressed, humiliated, and robbed by their barbarian masters, no sooner hailed the Roman eagles, than they imagined that the days of their greatest prosperity under the Antonines were returned. Before the arrival of Belisarius, Gelimer reigned over seven or eight millions of subjects, in a country which had, perhaps, contained 80,000,000; on a sudden he found himself alone with his Vandals in the midst of a Roman population. The historian Proco-

pius, who seeks to exaggerate the number of the conquered, in order to enhance the glory of the conquest, asserts that the nation did not possess fewer than 160,000 men capable of bearing arms;—a considerable number certainly, and one which supposes a rapid increase since the former conquest; but extremely small, if it be taken to denote a nation, and not an army.

Gelimer attacked Belisarius with all the troops he had been able to muster, on the 14th of September, at about ten miles from Carthage: his army was routed, his brother and his nephew were killed, and he himself was obliged to fly to the deserts of Numidia, after having caused his predecessor Hilderic to be murdered in prison. On the morrow Belisarius entered Carthage, and that great capital, in which the Romans still far outnumbered the Vandals, received him as a deliverer.

Never was there a more rapid conquest than that of the vast kingdom of the Vandals; never did the disproportion between the number of the conquerors and the conquered more clearly show that tyranny is the worst policy, and that the abuse of victory by those who govern with the sword, hollows a sepulchre beneath their thrones. In the beginning of September Belisarius had landed in Africa; before the end of November Gelimer had recalled his second brother from Sardinia, collected another army, fought and lost another battle; Africa was conquered, and the kingdom of the Vandals destroyed. The army of Belisarius would have required much more time merely to advance along the coast; but the Roman fleet transported to Ceuta the tribunes of the soldiers who were to take the command of the towns; they were every where received with acclamation; every where the Vandals were intimidated, submitted without resistance, and disappeared. Gelimer, who had retired into a distant fortress of Numidia with a small retinue, capitulated in the following spring, and the terms of his submission were most honourably observed by Justinian. Gelimer received ample possessions in Galatia, where he was allowed to grow old in peace, surrounded by his friends and kinsfolk. The observance of faith plighted to a rival was too rare a virtue in those times for us to pass it by in silence. The bravest of the Vandals enlisted in the troops of the empire, and served under the immediate orders of Belisarius. The remainder of the nation was involved in the convulsions of Africa which we shall shortly mention, and ere long entirely disappeared.

Justinian demanded trophies from his generals, but he grudged them their successes. His jealousy at the rapid victories of Belisarius was intense. Before the close of that same autumn of 534 which had sufficed for the conquest of a kingdom, too soon for the welfare of Africa, he ordered him to return to Constantinople. In the matchless character of Belisarius, the virtues themselves seemed adapted to the despotism under which he served. The will of his sovereign, and not the welfare of the empire, was the sole end of his actions, and the sole standard of what he judged to be good or evil. He foresaw that his recall would be the ruin of Africa, but he did not hesitate to obey the mandate. As he was embarking at Carthage, he saw the flames which were already lighted by the insurgent Moors in the provinces which he had reconquered, and he predicted that his work would be undone as rapidly as it had been accomplished; but the will of the emperor seemed to him to be the will of fate. His prompt obedience allayed the jealousy which his remarkable success had excited, and Justinian allowed him the honours of a triumph, and the consulate for the ensuing year. This triumph was the first which Constantinople had ever seen conferred upon a subject.

The conquest of Africa was no sooner accomplished, than Justinian projected that of Italy, and he designed to subdue the Ostrogoths by the same general who had acquired so much glory in defeating the Vandals. A Roman emperor may be supposed to have thought his honour interested in the possession of Rome and of Italy, but the West had no reasons for wishing him success. The Vandals had rendered themselves odious by their cruelty, their religious persecutions, and their piracies; but the Goths had better claims on public esteem: they were the wisest, the most temperate, and the most virtuous of the Germanic tribes, and they gave substantial grounds of hope to the nations which they had regenerated. Their glory did not terminate with the reign of Theodoric, but to the very close of the struggle in which they perished they displayed virtues which we look for in vain amongst the other barbarians.

We have seen that upon the death of the great Theodoric, (A. D. 526,) the crown of Italy descended to his grandson Athalaric, who was then only ten years old, under the regency of his mother Amalasonta. This princess, who had lost her husband before her father's death, attempted to procure for her son, the

only hope of his family and of his nation, those advantages of a liberal education which she had herself enjoyed. But Athalaric, who felt the irksomeness of study more than its advantages, easily found young courtiers who persuaded him that the protecting care of his mother was degrading to him. The old warriors of the nation had not lost their prejudices against Roman instruction, and Roman manners; Athalaric was removed from his mother's guardianship, and, before he was sixteen, drunkenness and debauchery brought him to the grave. (A. D. 534.) Out of respect for the blood of Theodoric, and the grief of Amalasonta, she was allowed by the Goths to choose the future partner of her throne from amongst her kindred. She accordingly bestowed her hand on Theodatus, who, like herself, preferred studious pursuits to the boisterous revelry of the Goths; who passed for a philosopher; whom she believed to be destitute of ambition, and who had, indeed, sworn to her that, grateful for so signal a favour, he would respect her commands and allow her to rule alone, whilst he shared her throne in appearance. No sooner, however, was he crowned, than he caused his benefactress to be arrested, (30th of April, 535,) conveyed as a prisoner to an island in the lake of Bolsena, and a few months afterwards strangled in her bath. Justinian embraced the cause of Amalasonta, as he had embraced that of Hilderic, to avenge, though not to protect her. Belisarius received orders to prepare for the conquest of Italy, but the army with which he was intrusted for this important enterprise, amounted only to 4500 barbarian horsemen, and 3000 Isaurian foot-soldiers. Belisarius landed in Sicily in 535, and in the first campaign of the Gothic war he subdued that island; the city of Palermo alone offered him some resistance.

In the following year Belisarius transported his army to Reggio in Calabria, marching along the coast, accompanied by his fleet, till he arrived at Naples: no forces were sent to oppose his progress; he was assisted by the same favourable circumstances as in Africa, and his humanity and moderation procured for him the same advantages in Italy as in that country. On a sudden the Goths perceived, with consternation, that they were in an isolated position, in the midst of a people which invoked their enemies as its liberators. All their plans of defence were confounded, treason began to show itself in their ranks, and a relation of Theodatus, to whom the government of Calabria had been intrusted, passed over to the standard of the emperor. The

cowardice of their king was, however, the chief cause of the ruin of the Goths. Theodatus had shut himself up in Rome, whilst Belisarius besieged Naples, and entered it by means of an aqueduct. The nation of the Goths, which still reckoned 250,000 warriors, dispersed, indeed, from the Danube and the Rhone to the extremities of Italy, would no longer submit to so degrading a yoke. Vitiges, a brave general, who had been ordered to secure the approaches to Rome, was suddenly proclaimed king by the soldiers, and raised upon the buckler; whilst Theodatus, as soon as he heard of this revolt, took flight, and was slain by the hand of a private enemy, against whom he did not even attempt to defend himself. (August, 536.)

After the election of Vitiges, the war of the Ostrogoths assumed a new character. The struggle was no longer one of cowardice and improvidence with talent; it lay between two great men, both of them masters of the art of war, both equally worthy of the love and of the confidence of their respective nations; both contending against insurmountable difficulties. Belisarius was, as he had been in Africa, just, humane, generous, and brave: he won the hearts of the Italians; but his court kept him without money, and almost without an army. The hard law of necessity, the orders he received from Constantinople, and the rapacious colleagues who were sent out to him, compelled him to sustain the war by plunder, and to strip those whom he would have willingly protected. Vitiges was still at the head of a powerful and martial people; but his kingdom was disorganized, time was needed to collect his scattered battalions, and to revive the confidence of his soldiers, who believed that they were surrounded by traitors. He found it necessary to evacuate Rome, (which Belisarius occupied on the 10th of December, 536,) and even to quit the lower part of Italy, and fall back upon Ravenna, in order to restore the discipline of his army. As soon as he had organized his forces, he returned, in the month of March following, to besiege Belisarius in the ancient capital which he had ceded to him.

Our prescribed limits do not allow us to give any detailed account of the military operations even of the greatest general. A succinct abridgment, like the present, does not profess to afford any instruction in the art of war. We merely design to present, in one picture, the fall of the ancient empire, and the dispersal of those elements out of which the modern world was to arise, referring to other works for details. Nor would it be without re-

pugnance that we should dwell upon the sufferings of humanity, or the unparalleled calamities which were caused by two virtuous chiefs. The spectacle of the excesses of tyranny is far less painful, for then our indignation relieves our sympathy. In recording the crimes of the sons of Clovis, the horror these monsters inspire, leaves no room for pity. But when Vitiges besieged Belisarius in Rome during a whole year, two heroes sacrificed two nations to their animosity. Belisarius kept up the courage of his feeble garrison by his intrepidity, his patience, and his perseverance, whilst the entire population of Rome was perishing by famine: Vitiges, equally inflexible, led back the battalions of his Goths to the walls of Rome, until the assailants were all destroyed by the sword, or by pestilential diseases. His courage and his ability shone conspicuously in this deadly war: if he had succeeded, the independence of his nation was secured; but it perished in these fatal conflicts.

Justinian had desired that Italy should again be classed amongst the provinces of the Roman empire. But his vanity was satisfied by the mere possession of the soil on which the Romans had raised their power; and he purchased it by the sacrifice of all that made it glorious or valuable. Rome was defended, but during the long famine to which it was reduced it lost almost all its inhabitants. The Goths were conquered; but they were destroyed, not subdued, and the void they left in the energetic and warlike population of Italy was never repaired. The Italians were delivered from a yoke which they thought debasing, but they fell under one a thousand times worse. The long continuance of the war, and the pressure of want, did violence to the natural moderation of Belisarius, and, moreover, gave him time to receive direct orders from Justinian, instead of following his own impulses.

The extortions practised on the Roman subjects were rigorous in the extreme, and that population, which had repaired its losses during the protecting reign of Theodoric, was swept off by famine, pestilence, and the avenging sword of the Goths: the glorious monuments of Italy,—the very stones,—were not exempt from destruction. The master-works of art were used as military engines, and the statues which adorned the mole of Adrian were hurled down upon the besiegers. In his utmost need, Vitiges had demanded the succour of the Franks, and a dreadful invasion of that barbarian people, which was marked by the destruction of Milan and Genoa, (A. D. 538, 539,) taught the Goths, that these fierce warriors, thirsting for booty and for blood, did not even

care to distinguish their allies from their enemies. On the same day they cut to pieces the army of the Goths, and the army of the Greeks, which had both reckoned upon their assistance; at length they almost all perished from want in the Cisalpine country, which they had devastated; and when soldiers like these perish from hunger, it is easy to infer that nothing remains either to the peasant or to the citizen, which their oppressors can pillage or destroy.

In March, 538, when the Goths were obliged to raise the siege of Rome, Belisarius profited by their discouragement, their sufferings, and their faults; he laid siege in his turn to Ravenna, and forced Vitiges to give up that town, and to surrender himself prisoner. (December, 539.) Vitiges was as deeply indebted to the generosity of Justinian, as Gelimer had been; he passed his days in affluence at Constantinople: Belisarius was at the same time recalled from Italy.

Justinian hastened to recall his general after each victory, and Belisarius was not less prompt in his obedience; but every time he quitted the command, the provinces he abandoned were exposed to the most dreadful calamities; and the whole empire had ample reason to regret that the fate of several millions of men depended on the caprices of a court, on the mistrust or the envy of a haughty woman, or of a jealous despot. Five years before, at the very time when Belisarius was leaving Africa, in obedience to the orders of Justinian, a rebellion broke out among the Moors, and the hero, who was submissively leaving those shores in the moment of danger, could see from his vessel the fires which were kindled over the country by the very enemy from whose attacks he had hitherto protected it. The ministers of Justinian seemed studiously to increase, by their vexatious enactments, the resentment of the armed population of Africa, the weakness and the degradation of the unarmed. The wandering Moor, whose habits were, even in that age, not unlike those of the Bedouin Arab, endeavoured to destroy all cultivation, all permanent dwellings, and industrious arts, and drove civilization back to the sea-coast: there it was restricted to the maritime towns and their narrow suburbs; so that during the remainder of Justinian's reign it was estimated that the province of Africa barely equalled one-third of the province of Italy.

The retirement of Belisarius after the capture of Vitiges was followed by similar calamities; Pavia was the only town of importance which still resisted the Roman yoke. It was defended by

a thousand Goths, who proclaimed their chief Hildebald king: he, as well as his successor Eraric, was assassinated within the year, and was succeeded by Totila, a young kinsman of Vitiges, whose excellent abilities were only equalled by his bravery and his humanity. This new king repaired the dilapidated fortunes of the Goths by his remarkable virtues as much as by his victories: he recalled to the army the sons of those who had already fallen in its ranks: he harassed, attacked, and routed successively eleven generals, to whom Justinian had intrusted the defence of the different towns of Italy: he crossed the whole peninsula, from Verona to Naples, in order to collect the scattered warriors of his nation, who had been obliged to submit in every province, and in the course of three years (A. D. 541—544,) the kingdom of the Ostrogoths became, under his command, as extensive, if not as powerful, as it was when the war began. Justinian occasionally sent re-enforcements to his generals in Italy, but these scanty supplies served only to prolong a contest which they could not hope to terminate. The arrival of 200 men from Constantinople was looked upon as an event; and such was the universal desolation of Italy, that bands of one or two hundred soldiers crossed its whole extent without meeting any sufficient obstacle to their progress. In 544, Justinian sent back Belisarius, but without an army; so that for four years this hero was compelled to struggle with his adversary, more like a captain of banditti than a distinguished general; the extent of the havoc was disproportioned to their scanty resources, and a handful of soldiers on either side burnt and destroyed what they were unable to defend.

Totila besieged Rome for a long time, and obtained possession of it on the 17th of December, 546; he determined to destroy a city which had displayed such inveterate hostility to the Goths; he razed the walls, and forced the inhabitants to seek a refuge in the Campania. For forty days the ancient capital of the world remained deserted. Belisarius took advantage of this occurrence to re-enter it, and fortify himself in it once more; but he was again obliged to quit it. Justinian, in leaving this great man to contend, almost without money and without troops, against an enemy infinitely superior to him in strength, seemed to be labouring to destroy a reputation of which he was jealous. When he recalled Belisarius for the second time, Italy was ravaged for four years by the conflicting fury of civil and foreign war; the Franks and Germans made another incursion without the autho-

city of their government, without leaders, and with the sole object of plundering on a large scale. At length, in 552, Justinian formed an army of 30,000 men; he appointed a man to command it, in whom we scarcely expect to find the talents or the character of a hero; but the eunuch Narses, who had passed his youth in directing the tasks of the women in the palace, and had gained experience in various embassies in his later years, fully justified the choice of Justinian, when placed at the head of the army. In the month of July, 552, he gained a great victory over the Goths, in the neighbourhood of Rome, when Totila was slain: in the month of March, 553, he won another battle near Naples, in which Teia, who had been chosen to succeed Totila, was also killed: and thus was accomplished the overthrow of the monarchy of the Ostrogoths, the almost total destruction of that nation, and the submission to the emperor of the sad deserts of that Italy, in which all that was most delicious and magnificent in the world had so long been accumulated.

After the victories of Narses, Italy was governed, in the name of the emperor of Constantinople, by exarchs, who resided at Ravenna, though, indeed, the government of the country scarcely remained sixteen years under the control of the empire of the East: the fortified town of Ravenna, however, and the Pentapolis, which is now called La Romagna, not in memory of Rome, but of the Greeks who affected to call themselves Romans, long formed part of its possessions. La Romagna and some other smaller provinces continued for two centuries, that is, until 752, to be governed by the exarch of Italy; another exarch governed Africa, and resided at Carthage. Justinian had even extended his conquests to some cities in Spain, and had contributed to to keep alive anarchy in that great peninsula; but as the Roman province which he had recovered was not sufficiently important to deserve a third exarch, Greek dukes were appointed to such of the Spanish towns as opened their gates to the generals of Justinian, and of his successors, from 550 to 620.

The wars which Justinian carried on in the East against Chosroes occasioned as much misery as his expedition in the West. Syria was entirely occupied, and the frontiers of Armenia were devastated by the Persians, whilst Colchis was disputed with the greatest obstinacy, for sixteen years, by the two empires, (A. D. 540—556.) After a prodigious waste of human life, the frontiers of the Romans and the Persians remained much the same as they

were before the war: as those countries have remained in a barbarous state ever since, they the less merit our notice.

Justinian was nearly eighty years of age, when he was obliged to have recourse for the last time to the valour and ability of his general, who was not less aged than himself, in order to repel an invasion of the Bulgarians, who, in 559, advanced to the gates of Constantinople. The venerable Belisarius was looked upon as the only safeguard of the empire; he with difficulty collected 300 of those soldiers, who, in happier years, had shared his toils; to these was added a timorous troop of peasants and recruits, who refused to fight. He succeeded, however, in repulsing the Bulgarians; but this success, and the enthusiasm of the people, excited the jealousy and the fears of Justinian, who had invariably punished his general for the victories he gained. In 540, he had been condemned to a fine amounting to £120,000 sterling: in 563 a conspiracy against the emperor was discovered, Belisarius was implicated in it; and whilst his pretended accomplices were executed, Justinian affected to pardon his old servant; but he caused his eyes to be torn out, and confiscated his whole fortune. This account is adopted by the young and learned biographer of Belisarius, lord Mahon, though it only rests upon the authority of historians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The general who had conquered two kingdoms was to be seen, blind, and led by a child, holding out a wooden cup before the convent of Lauros to crave the pittance of an obolus. It appears, however, that the disapprobation of the people caused Justinian to repent his severity, and Belisarius was restored to his palace, where he died on the 13th of March, 565: Justinian also expired on the 14th of September, in the same year.

The glory which Justinian derives from the collection and publication of the ancient Roman laws, is more solid and more durable than that of his conquests. The Pandects and the Code, which were arranged and promulgated by his authority, contain the immense store of the wisdom of preceding ages; and we cannot but be astonished at finding so much respect for law in the character of a despot; so much virtue in so corrupt an age; so deep a reverence for antiquity, at a time when every institution was overthrown; and, lastly, a system of legislation entirely Latin, published by a Greek in the midst of Greeks. For, although Justinian sometimes substituted the stamp of servility for the noble and primitive character of the ancient law; though he

occasionally deranged a system which had been slowly matured by the jurists, to satisfy the whim of the moment, or his own personal interest, it cannot be denied that the work he sanctioned is a valuable monument of justice and of reason, of which he was, though not the author, the preserver.

That absolute government which had corrupted every Roman virtue, did not, in the time of Justinian, even give internal peace to the people in exchange for their lost liberty. Despotism may render civil war and popular commotions dishonourable, but it cannot suppress them. There was no longer sufficient virtue in Constantinople to induce a man to expose his life in the defence of his civil rights, for the honour of his country, or for the laws which he regarded as sacred; but battles were fought for the charioteers of the circus. Chariot-racing, which had been a favourite amusement of the Romans, was introduced into Constantinople, and afterwards into all the great towns of the empire; the prizes were contended for by charioteers dressed either in a blue or a green uniform: the entire population was divided into two parties distinguished by these colours. Two hostile factions broke out throughout the empire; religion, politics, morality, liberty, and all the lofty sentiments of human nature, had no part in their animosity; but the Greens and the Blues, who were only contending for the prizes of the circus, could not be satisfied without shedding each other's blood. Justinian himself, worked upon by an ancient enmity of Theodora, embraced the cause of the Blues, and, during his reign, the Greens could never obtain justice. The judges, who were to pass sentence on the property, the good name, or the lives of the citizens, examined less into their conduct and their rights than into the colour of their party. On several occasions, private violence assumed the character of open sedition; but in 532, during the most terrible of these revolts, which is called *Nika*, or victory, from the cry which was adopted, the capital remained for five days in the power of an infuriated mob: the cathedral, several churches, baths, theatres, palaces, and a large portion of the town, was reduced to ashes. Justinian, who was on the point of taking flight, was only maintained upon the throne by the firmness of his wife Theodora. Torrents of blood were shed by men who were too cowardly to defend their country against barbarians, or their rights against internal oppression.

CHAPTER XI.

Succession of Greek Emperors.—Narses, Exarch of Italy.—The Gepidæ and the Lombards, between the Alps and the Danube.—Romantic Story of Alboin, King of the Lombards; his Conquest of the Gepidæ; his Invasion of Italy.—Resistance of the maritime Cities of Italy; their internal Government.—Maritime Cities of Spain, Africa, and Illyricum.—Growth of municipal Liberties.—Independence of the Lombards; their thirty Dukes in Italy.—The four Frankic Kings, Sons of Chlothaire.—Growth of a territorial Aristocracy.—The Mord Dom, or supreme Judge of the Franks.—The four Kingdoms of Germany.—Gontran, surnamed “The Good.”—Chilperic, the Nero of France.—Fredegunde.—Brunehilde.—Efforts of Gontran to keep down the Nobles.—Scene in the National Assembly of the Franks, from Gregory of Tours.—Childebert II.; his Ferocity.—Energy, Talents, and Cruelty of Brunehilde.—Her Successes.—Her Defeat and miserable Death.—A. D. 561—613.

AT the time when the empire of the West was overthrown, when each of its provinces was occupied by a different people, and when as many kingdoms were founded as there were daring chiefs at the head of a horde of barbarians, the world presented a scene of such complex and conflicting interests, that it seemed a very difficult task to follow the general progress of events. This difficulty has, however, ceased, in a great measure, as far as we are concerned. From the reign of Justinian, the interest of European history lies almost entirely between the Greek empire and the kingdom of the Franks, which, although it had not yet acquired the title of empire, stood at the head of the whole of western Europe. This exclusive interest, this almost universal monarchy of the Franks in the West, continued until the end of the reign of Louis le Debonnaire, and the civil wars between his children in 840.

During these three centuries, the history of the Latin world is frequently obscure, generally barbarous, and always incomplete; but it is constantly connected with the progressive revolutions of that great people which will be the principal object of our observations. During the same period the history of the East became extremely complicated; the sceptre of Justinian passed successively to his nephew, Justin the younger, (A. D. 565—574;) from him to Tiberius II., (574—582;) to Maurice, (582—602;) to

Phocas, (602—610;) and to Heraclius, (610—642.) Three of these princes, Tiberius, Maurice, and Heraclius, were distinguished by their virtues: and the claim of this period to the epithet of glorious, is, at least, equal to that of the reign of Justinian. It would probably be esteemed so, if the events were better known; but, in monarchies, the interest excited by public concerns is not sufficiently strong to induce many men of distinguished talents to devote themselves to the severe labours of the historian. Annals are seldom continued from the zeal of their authors alone: the vanity of the monarch may, indeed, lead him to appoint an historiographer, but, at the same time, it forbids the salaried historian to tell the truth. Events are then only recorded in panegyrics, which inspire no confidence, or in dry and insipid chronicles, which excite no interest. The good fortune by which the reign of Justinian possessed a great historian was rare indeed in the history of Byzantium.

This same period answers to that of the birth and education of a man, who was destined in his maturer years to change the face of the world. Justinian died in 565, and Mohammed was born in 569; yet, until his flight to Medina, in 622, the remainder of the world, and even Arabia itself, was almost unconscious of his existence; and as the ten last years of his life, (A. D. 622—632,) after he had obtained the sovereign power, were devoted to the conquest of that great peninsula, the empire only learned the mighty revolution which had taken place, when (A. D. 628—632) it was called upon for the first time to meet the Musulmauns in the field.

Before we engage in the history of the founder of the new religion, we shall, in another chapter, survey the state of the East, and the conquests and defeats of Chosroes II., whose memorable reign cast a lustre, which was but the harbinger of its fall, over the monarchy of the Sassanian Persians. Our present object has been simply to recall the concordance of events in the different parts of the world, before we return to the history of the West.

That country, which had so long been looked upon as the queen of the earth,—that Italy, which had been ruined and desolated by the wars of the Greeks, and by the annihilation of the monarchy of the Ostrogoths, soon underwent another revolution. The eunuch Narses, who had conquered, was appointed to govern it; in his extreme old age he administered for fifteen years (A. D. 553—568) the affairs of a country, which, perhaps, stood

in need of a younger and more active ruler. This extraordinary man, who is said to have attained the age of ninety-five, had established himself at Ravenna, whence he once more imposed the laws of the empire on the Italians; laws of which they knew little, except the grievous imposts heaped upon them in their name. Narses was the avaricious servant of an avaricious master; he was accused of amassing excessive wealth by draining the people, who enjoyed no advantages which might compensate for the costliness of their government. The fugitives who had been dispersed by the Greek and Gothic armies, gradually congregated in the towns; Milan arose from its ruins, and the other cities recovered a part of their population; but the country was entirely deserted, and the crops which sustained the remnant of the Italians were, probably, raised by the hands of citizens: no one dared to inhabit the rural districts, at a time when public force was extinct, and no protection was ensured to the agriculturist. The events which occurred at the close of the administration of Narses, showed that there was no army in Italy; although barbarous and hostile nations, who were acquainted with the roads throughout the country, were besieging its approaches.

Narses was driven from his post in the most insulting manner by the empress Sophia, wife of Justin II., who sent him a distaff, and told him that he ought to resume those feminine occupations for which he was fitted. He has been accused of having summoned the barbarians to assist him in avenging himself, but it is certain that such an invitation was unnecessary.

In that district, which had once been Roman, extending from the foot of the Alps to the Danube, the Gepidæ, of Gothic, and the Lombards, of Vandal race, had taken up their abode: both of these tribes were said to surpass in ferocity any of the preceding enemies of the empire; both of them had accepted the alliance of the Greeks for the sake of tribute, disguised under the name of pension. The Gepidæ were to guard the entrance to Italy: the Lombards had contributed to the conquest of that country, by the valiant auxiliaries they had furnished to Narses. The most virulent animosity divided these two nations, which had been kept alive by the romantic, and, perhaps, fabulous adventures related of their kings. The historians of a barbarous people are always unacquainted with, or indifferent to, the domestic events of their country: kings, alone, appear upon the scene; their adventures take the place of national exploits; and

even the fictions of which they are the heroes, merit some attention, as they show us the bent of the popular imagination.

Alboin, the young heir to the throne of the Lombards, had already displayed his valour in an expedition against the Gepidæ, and had slain with his own hand the son of their king; nevertheless, his father would not consent to admit him to his table until he had received his arms from the hands of some foreign sovereign. Such was the invariable custom of their nation, afterwards incorporated into the laws of chivalry, and called the arming of a knight. This custom is attested by Paul Warnefrid, a Lombard historian, contemporary with Charlemagne. Alboin, with forty of his bravest companions, did not hesitate to ask his knightly arms at the hands of Thurisund, king of the Gepidæ, and father of the prince whom he had slain. The duties of hospitality were more sacred in the eyes of the old king than those of vengeance, and the prince was received at the table of the monarch of the Gepidæ; he was arrayed in new armour, and protected amid the disorder of a banquet, at which Cunimund, another son of Thurisund, attempted to avenge his brother. This warlike hospitality, with which so many vindictive and hostile feelings were mingled, gave Alboin an opportunity of inflicting a fresh outrage on the royal house of the Gepidæ: he carried off Rosamunde, the daughter of Cunimund, but he was overtaken before he could escape; the princess was taken from him, his offer of marriage rejected, and the two kings, as well as the two nations, excited by mutual aggressions, mutually determined on each other's destruction. Their hostility broke out when Alboin and Cunimund had both succeeded to their aged parents. The Lombard king, perceiving that he was the weaker, sought for foreign assistance: he enlisted the Saxons under his standard, and he more especially strengthened his forces by an alliance with the khan of the Avars, a nomadic people, which had descended from the mountains of Tartary, and had crossed all the Slavonian and Sarmatian deserts, in its flight from the vengeance of the Turks. The Avars had threatened the frontiers of the Greeks, invaded the territory of several German nations subject to the Franks, and had afterwards roamed over the north of Europe with their flocks, seeking to possess themselves of some territory by the sword. Alboin united his desire of vengeance on the Gepidæ, to a design which he cherished of conquering Italy and establishing his people in that

country. The valley of the Danube had been so cruelly devastated by successive barbarous hordes, that every trace of its ancient civilization was effaced. Its rich pastures were peculiarly adapted to a pastoral people; but the Germans were unwilling to perform the drudgery of the mechanical or agricultural arts, though they had learned to appreciate the enjoyments they procure: they accordingly wished to subdue a country in which the conquered people should work for them, and they concluded a singular treaty with the Avars, by which it was stipulated that they should attack the Gepidæ, destroy their monarchy, and divide their spoils in common; but that, after this conquest, the Lombards should abandon their own country, as well as that of their subdued enemies, to their allies, and start themselves to seek their fortune elsewhere. These extraordinary conditions were literally fulfilled; the kingdom of the Gepidæ was overrun; their army was defeated by Alboin in a great battle, (A. D. 566;) their wealth was divided between the conquerors; the inhabitants of the country were reduced to slavery, and the princess Rosamunde was given back to Alboin, who married her. At the same time the Lombards prepared to abandon to the Avars Pannonia and Noricum, where they had dwelt for forty-two years. They gathered together their wives, their children, their old men, and their slaves, removed all their valuables, and having set fire to their houses, migrated towards the Italian Alps.

Alboin, who united to his own character all the virtues and all the vices of a barbarian, was not less remarkable for his prudence and his valour, than for his ferocity and intemperance. The nation of the Lombards, of which he was the leader, had been distinguished above all the nations of Germany for its bravery ever since the time of Tacitus, but it was far from numerous. Before he invaded Italy, he endeavoured to secure some reenforcements. He had formerly been connected with the Saxons, and as his previous conduct had won their confidence, twenty thousand of their warriors joined his army as soon as he summoned them to his standard. He liberated all the Gepidæ who had fallen to his lot, and enrolled them in his battalions. He also invited several other Germanic nations to join him; amongst them were the Bavarians, who had recently settled in the country which has since borne their name.

It was not an army, but an entire nation, which descended the

Alps of Friuli in the year 568. The exarch Longinus, who had succeeded Narses, shut himself up within the walls of Ravenna, and offered no other resistance. Pavia, which had been well fortified by the kings of the Ostrogoths, closed its gates, and sustained a siege of four years. Several other towns, Padua, Monzelice, and Mantua, opposed their isolated forces, but with less perseverance. The Lombards advanced slowly into the country, but still they advanced; at their approach, the inhabitants fled to the fortified towns upon the sea-coast, in the hope of being relieved by the Greek fleet, or, at least, of finding a refuge in the ships, if it became necessary to surrender the place. It was known that Alboin had bound himself by an atrocious vow to put to the sword all the inhabitants of Pavia, whenever it surrendered, and the resistance of that place, which it was impossible to relieve, was foreseen to be the prelude to dreadful calamities. The islands of Venice received the numerous fugitives from Venetia, and at their head the patriarch of Aquileia, who took up his abode at Grado: Ravenna opened its gates to the fugitives from the two banks of the Po; Genoa to those from Liguria; the inhabitants of La Romagna, between Rimini and Ancona, retired to the cities of the Pentapolis; Pisa, Rome, Gaeta, Naples, Amalfi, and all the maritime towns of the south of Italy were peopled at the same time by crowds of fugitives. The Lombards, who were ignorant of the arts used in sieges, could only reduce the cities which opposed them by famine, or by threats of a general massacre. This manner of attack was infallible for the places in the interior, but it was unsuccessful for those which lay upon the coast, all of which remained faithful to the Greeks.

But the Greeks, who were ignorant of the Latin language, indifferent to the welfare of remote countries whose geography even they had forgotten, and too much occupied with the wars of the Avars, the Persians, and the Arabs, to send succour to a few fortresses scattered along a distant shore, contented themselves with an honorary allegiance. They gave up the revenues of each town for its defence, and they thought themselves generous: indeed, they were so; for, while they gave nothing, they exacted nothing. Each city had preserved its *curia*, and its municipal institutions. As long as the ruling power had been close at hand, and perpetually despotic, this *curia* had been only a means of oppression, but it became a means of salvation to cities forgotten

by their sovereign, and left entirely to their own resources. Their constitution was purely republican; the confidence of the citizens, and the necessity of union, restored them to new vigour and dignity. The Greek emperor placed a duke at the head of each *curia*; he found it more economical to give that title to one of the citizens of these distant towns, and he generally followed the suggestion of the municipal senate in his choice. Thenceforward this duke or doge was nothing more than a republican magistrate, commanding a republican militia; disposing of finances, which were formed by almost voluntary contributions, and reviving, in the breasts of the Italians, virtues which had been extinct for centuries.

This happy revolution which was silently taking place in the maritime towns, was so little perceived by the Greek writers, that they continued to put into the mouths of the free Venetians, the declaration, that they were the slaves of the empire, and that they desired to remain so. But this change, which gradually raised the most despicable of men from the depths of baseness and of crime to be an example to the world, was not confined to the maritime cities of Italy.

Throughout the West, the Greek empire possessed scattered points along the coast, which it was too weak to protect; and it appealed to that virtue which it could not know, and to that patriotism which it could not understand, to defend those walls which it was itself unable to guard. In Spain, the civil wars during the reign of Loewegild, (A. D. 572—586,) and of Recasade, (A. D. 586—601,) which had been excited by the mutual intolerance of the catholics and the Arians, opened a great number of maritime places to the Greeks, and established in them municipal governments, which afterwards became glorious examples for the free cities of Catalonia and Arragon. In Africa, the invasions of the Gætuli and the Moors, by cutting off all land communication between the maritime cities, converted them into so many little isolated republics; these were shortly after destroyed by the great conquest of the Arabs. On the Illyrian coast, opposite to Italy, the inhabitants, driven to the cliffs which overhang the sea, found refuge against the risings of the Slavonians, and the inroads of the Bulgarians;—the celebrated league of the free cities of Istria and Dalmatia, in which Ragusa obtained a distinguished place, had enjoyed an independent existence of several centuries, before its voluntary union with Ve-

nice in 997. The Greeks obtained no footing upon the coast of France, but the example of Genoa, Pisa, and Naples, was not lost upon the cities of Arles, Marseilles, and Montpellier, which traded with them; a circumstance which explains the preservation of municipal privileges in the south of France, at a time when they were almost abolished in the north.

If the Lombards revived the spirit of social liberty, they also gave their subjects an example of the individual liberty and savage freedom of a nation which is more averse to servitude than to public disorder. Alboin did not long remain at the head of their armies; after a reign of three years and a half from the capture of Pavia, (which he had spared, notwithstanding his vow,) he was assassinated by that Rosamunde, whose father he had slain, whose people he had destroyed, and whom he had married after he had outraged her honour. In the intoxication of a banquet he sent her a cup which he had caused to be made of the scull of Cunimund, inlaid with gold, and ordered her *to drink with her father*. Rosamunde dissembled her resentment, but she employed that beauty which had been the source of her misfortunes and her crimes, to corrupt two of the guards of Alboin, whom she armed with daggers against the life of her husband. After the death of Alboin, at Verona, (A. D. 573,) Clef was elected by the suffrages of the Lombards, and raised upon the buckler: but, after a reign of eighteen months, he was killed by one of his pages, and the nation, which had already extended itself over a great portion of Italy, elected no successor to the throne for ten years. In every province where the Lombards had formed a settlement, their general assembly sufficed to administer justice, and to regulate the affairs of the government; it elected dukes as presidents, the number of whom amounted to thirty, for the whole of Italy. At length, however, the weaker members of the community began to feel the want of an authority which should control that of the dukes, and protect the rights of the people; whilst the danger of foreign wars, and the intrigues of the Greeks, rendered it advisable to name a chief. After an interregnum of ten years, Antharic was raised to the throne, probably in the year 584; and before the middle of the following century, the Lombards had acquired the habit of transmitting the crown from father to son, though they had not formally renounced the right of electing their kings.

The Lombards had scarcely completed the conquest of that

part of Italy which is called Lombardy after them, when they crossed the Provençal Alps to pillage the territory of the kings of the Franks, or perhaps with the intention of effecting a settlement there.

After the death of Chlothaire I., which happened in 561, the Frankic monarchy was governed by his four sons, Charibert, Gontran, Chilperic, and Siegbert. This was only the second generation of the conquerors, for these princes were the grandsons of Clovis: yet Gontran, who survived all his brothers, did not die till the year 593, exactly a century after the marriage of Clovis with Chlotilde. This century had witnessed very important changes in the administration and in the opinions of the Franks. The warriors, who were all equal when they arrived in Gaul, had soon found in the abuse of victory, means of acquiring iniquitous possessions, which could not be restrained within the bounds of equality. As the soil was cultivated by slaves, or by those classes of men, intermediate between slaves and free-born men, who are designated in their laws as tributaries, *lidi*, or fiscal dependants, the extent of their estates appeared to them no obstacle to their cultivation. The smaller the number of proprietors in proportion to the extent of their conquest, the more alarming was their usurpation. They did not, indeed, rob the wealthy Romans of their property by a general measure of spoliation, nor did they reduce them to slavery; but they constantly resorted to the law of the strongest, in a country where there was, in fact, no government—no protection for the weak. The poor freeman of Frankic extraction was not less exposed to this oppression than the Roman. The Franks still held their provincial assemblies for the administration of justice, but they were unable to enforce the decrees they issued; the rich who then first began to be styled great, gathered around them a certain number of retainers called leudes, by means of grants of land, and with these followers they were enabled to drown the voice of justice; to intimidate, to harass, and to plunder the freemen, and thus to induce them also to enlist in their bands of leudes. Henceforward, the great alone resorted to the general assemblies of the nation; they alone were known to the sovereign; they alone were intrusted with the command of the army, when the ban was called out: in a short time they alone constituted the nation; he who was rich was sure to become more so, and he who was poor was sure to be stripped of the little he possessed: in less than a century the turbulent democracy of the

Franks was transformed into a landed aristocracy of the most oppressive kind.

France, properly so called, was at that time divided into four provinces, which bore the name of kingdoms; Austrasia, Neustria, Burgundy, and Aquitaine. The Franks inhabited only the two former of these districts; they frequently called the inhabitants of the southern provinces Romans, although the nobles, the freemen, and almost all who bore arms, were nearly all of Burgundian or Visigothic race: but as they found themselves in a minority amongst the Gauls, they had already abandoned the Germanic languages and adopted the Latin tongue. The assemblies of the Frankic people were still held at Metz, or Soissons, the capitals of Austrasia and Neustria, with sufficient frequency to prevent the people from being crushed under the weight of oppression. It was probably to protect the freemen against their more powerful countrymen, that the office of *mord dom*, or chief judge of murder, was instituted about that time. This functionary was the supreme minister of justice, and, as his authority was superior to that of the tribunals, he was able to inflict punishment on such as were too powerful to fall under the ordinary laws. The resemblance of the Teutonic name, *mord dom*, to the Latin *major domus*, caused the latter expression to be applied to this great officer, and it was afterwards translated *Mayor of the palace*, which confused and obscured the true derivation of the word, as well as the nature of the office. The Mord Dom was chosen by the people, not by the king; his duty was to administer justice, and not to superintend the royal revenues. His office was not perpetual, but he was nominated whenever the people stood in need of him,—in times of faction, or during a minority; the *bracile*, or arm of justice, was carried before him, and this arm frequently fell upon the heads of criminals of the highest rank.

Germany, which had been united to the confederation of the Franks, was also divided into four kingdoms; Franconia, or German France, Allemania, or Swabia, Bavaria, and Thuringia. Christianity was only beginning to penetrate into these barbarous countries; letters were entirely neglected, and hence their history as well as their institutions are totally unknown. It appears, however, that each of these great nations marched under the command of an hereditary duke, and that the only connexion they had with the Franks, was that of making war in common.

Twice in the course of the reigns of Chlothaire's sons, these Germanic nations were invited into France by one of the kings, and devastated the country wherever they passed. The sons of Chlothaire hated each other as cordially, and formed as many treacherous designs against each other, as the sons of Clovis had done. They found, however, the nation more willing to adopt their quarrels as grounds of civil war.

Of the four sons of Chlothaire, Charibert, who had fixed his residence at Paris, and who was the sovereign of Aquitaine, passed his short life in the pursuit of sensual enjoyments, and in the grossest debauchery,—a kind of vice then so common among kings that it scarcely excited any censure. He had four wives at once, two of whom were sisters; one of them, Marcovesa, had previously taken the veil, but this was no obstacle to the king. Charibert died in 567, and the division of his kingdom of Aquitaine amongst his three brothers was one of the great causes of the civil wars of that century.

Gontran, the second of these kings, who survived all the others, (his reign lasted from 561 to 593,) and who had received Burgundy for his kingdom, and Orleans for his residence, is styled, by Gregory of Tours, in opposition to his brothers, “the good king Gontran.” His morality, indeed, passed for good: he is only known to have had two wives and one mistress, and he repudiated the first before he married the second: his temper was, moreover, reputed to be a kindly one; for, with the exception of his wife's physician, who was hewn in pieces because he was unable to cure her; of his two brothers-in-law, whom he caused to be assassinated; and of his bastard brother Gondebald, who was slain by treachery; no other act of cruelty is recorded of him, than that he razed the town of Cominges to the ground, and massacred all the inhabitants, men, women, and children. He was, however, in general, disposed to pardon offences; and he displayed incredible forbearance in favour of his sister-in-law, Fredegunde, who more than once attempted his life.

In opposition to the good king Gontran, his third brother, Chilperic, has been called the Nero of France; and, indeed, this barbarian, who aspired to the reputation of a poet, a grammarian, and a theologian, who was ambitious of every kind of success except that of gaining the affections of his subjects, may, on more than one account, be compared to the Roman tyrant. Soissons and Neustria had fallen to his share, and he reigned

over them from 561 to 584. His habits were more grossly licentious than those of any other French prince, and the number of queens and mistresses he collected in his palace was so great, that they were never enumerated. Amongst them, however, was the infamous Fredegunde, a worthy consort for such a monster. She was of low extraction, and had lived with Chilperic many years as his mistress before he married her; at length, however, she acquired an absolute ascendancy over him, which she employed to rid herself of all her rivals. Queen Galsuintha was strangled; queen Andovera was executed, after languishing for some time in exile; the others were driven from the palace. The children of these unfortunate women shared the same fate; three grown-up sons of Andovera perished successively by the order, or, at least, with the consent, of their father. The fate of their sister was even more cruel; Fredegunde abandoned her to the brutal lust of her pages, before she was put to death.

A king who shed the blood of his children with so little remorse, was not likely to spare that of his people. France was full of unhappy victims whose eyes Chilperic had caused to be torn out, or whose arms he had cut off; assassins, hired by Fredegunde, kept the country in a constant state of alarm; they pursued her enemies beyond her own territory, and frequently murdered them in the palaces of kings, or in the assemblies of the people. The young pages and priests whom she brought up in her palace, were the ministers of her vengeance or of her policy. They committed the most horrible crimes with the persuasion that heaven would be open to them, if they succeeded not upon earth, "Go," said she, as she armed them with poisoned knives, "go; and if you return alive, great shall be the honour of yourselves and all your race; if you fall, I will distribute abundant alms at the tombs of the saints for the welfare of your souls!" The contemporary author who relates these words, does not seem to doubt the efficacy of such alms. Chilperic was assassinated in 584; but Fredegunde, who was left a widow with a child only four months old, Chlothaire II., succeeded in maintaining that infant prince on the throne of Neustria, and lived till the year 598 in glory and prosperity.

The fourth son, Siegbert, to whose share Austrasia had fallen, with Metz as a residence, was younger than his brothers when he mounted the throne, but his conduct was far more decorous, as he never had any other wife than the celebrated Brunehilde,

daughter of Athanagild, the king of the Visigoths. The allegiance of the Germanic nations beyond the Rhine was so uncertain, that, without paying attention to their number or to the extent of country which they occupied, they had all been included in the share of this prince, although he was the youngest, and, consequently, entitled to the smallest portion. But Siegbert soon taught the other Franks how formidable these lawless nations really were. Twice, in his disputes with Chilperic, he led them into the heart of France, and twice the banks of the Seine and the environs of Paris were devastated with inconceivable fury: Siegbert already considered himself master of Neustria, and had dismissed his Teutonic auxiliaries, laden with plunder, when, in 575, he was assassinated by two pages of Fredegunde. His crown passed to a minor, Childebert II. Nine years afterwards, as we have already observed, the crown of Neustria passed to another minor, Chlothaire II. Charibert had died without heirs, and Gontran, who was still alive, was also childless; and, as he was not allowed to be the guardian of his nephews, the three kingdoms of Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgundy, began to be looked upon, even by the Franks, as totally distinct. The minority of the kings, and the implacable hostility of their fathers, had enabled the nobility to usurp the supreme power. Thenceforth the government of Austrasia may be looked upon as an aristocracy feebly controlled by the authority of the Mord Dom, otherwise called the mayor of the palace. Neustria was approaching the same state, but by slower steps. King Gontran, who was indolent and capricious in his habits, and who lived in perpetual dread of the poniard, was unable to stay the progress of aristocratical power even in Burgundy; though he was not the guardian of his nephews, he still thought that he was necessary to their defence. One day, just as the priest who was about to celebrate mass in the cathedral at Paris, had imposed silence on the assembled crowd, Gontran, who had come to that city a short time after the death of Chilperic, with the intention of restoring peace in Neustria, addressed them in the following language:—"Men and women here assembled! I conjure you not to break the faith which you have plighted to me, and not to cause my death, as you have recently caused that of my brothers: I ask only for three years; but three years are absolutely necessary to enable me to bring up my nephews, whom I look upon as my adopted children. Let us beware, and may God forbid that

at my death you should perish together with these children, since there no longer remains an individual of my race, who is of an age to protect you." Instead of three, "good king Gontran," lived ten years longer, and died, at length, a natural death; but it may be doubted whether his life or his death were matters of such extreme importance to his family and to the nation as he supposed.

A natural son of Chlothaire, a brother whom Gontran refused to acknowledge, took advantage of the death of almost all the heads of his family to endeavour to get himself proclaimed king by the Franks. During this civil war, Gontran summoned the national assembly to meet at Paris. Gregory of Tours, who was, doubtless, present on this occasion, gives us an animated description of all that passed there, which portrays the state of France far better than a long detail of the high feats performed in war. With a view, therefore, to throw light on this period, we shall borrow his language, without attempting to restrict ourselves to the national annals, or the chronological order of events. France was making no foreign conquests, and her relations with other nations were unchanged; but an insight into her national assemblies enables us to appreciate, not the events of a day, but the spirit of an age.

"In the year 584, the kingdom of Austrasia," says Gregory of Tours, "deputed to this assembly, in the name of Childeburt, Egidius, bishop of Rheims, Gontran-Boson, and Siegwald, (the chief ministers of the young prince,) who were accompanied by a great multitude of Austrasian nobles. As soon as they had come in, the bishop said to king Gontran, 'We render thanks to Almighty God, that, after so many toils, he hath restored thee to thy provinces, and to thy kingdom.'—'It is, indeed,' answered Gontran, 'to Him who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, that thanks are due! He it is who hath done these things in his great mercy, and not thou, who by thy perfidious and perjured advice causedst the destruction of my provinces last year; thou, whose plighted faith hath never been kept to any man; thou, whose snares are spread on every side, more befitting an enemy of this realm, than a priest of God.' The bishop shook with rage at this discourse, but he made no answer; thereupon another deputy got up, and said, 'Thy nephew, Childeburt, beggeth thee to order the cities, which his father possessed, to be restored to him.' To which the king answered, 'I have already told you,

that they were conferred on me by treaty, and that I will not give them up.' Another deputy then said, 'Thy nephew demandeth, that the wicked Fredegunde, who hath killed so many kings, be given over to him, that he may avenge the death of his father, of his uncle, and of his cousins.' Gontran answered, 'I have no power to deliver her into his hands, since she is herself the mother of a king: moreover, I do not believe in the truth of your accusations against her.'

"After all these, Gontran-Boson approached the king, as if he had something to say; but as it was already noised abroad that Gondewald had been proclaimed king, Gontran interrupted him, and said, 'Enemy of this land, and of our realm! why didst thou go into the East some years ago to fetch back this Ballomer into our states? (for so he always called Gondewald, who pretended to be his brother.) Thou art a traitor, and thou hast never kept any one promise thou hast made. Then Gontran-Boson replied, 'Thou art our lord and our king, seated upon a throne, so that no one dares answer thy charges; nevertheless, I protest that I am innocent of all thou sayest: and if any one of my own rank has accused me of these things covertly, let him come forth and speak this day; and thou, O king! shall submit this cause to the judgment of God, who will decide between us in open fight in one field.'

"Thereupon every one was silent, and the king rejoined, 'It is a thing which ought to inflame all your hearts, to drive this stranger from our frontiers, whose father was nothing better than the master of a mill,—ay! his father held the comb, and carded wool.' Now, though it is very possible for one man to have two trades, a deputy answered the reproaches of the king, and said, 'What, then, dost thou affirm that this man had two fathers,—one a miller, and the other a wool-comber? Take care, O king! of what thou sayest; for, except in spiritual matters, we have never yet heard that a man can have two fathers at once.' At these words many of the deputies laughed aloud, and one of them said, 'We take our leave, O king! for since thou wilt not restore the cities which belong to thy nephew, we know that the axe which laid thy brothers low is not broken, and will fall upon thy head also.'

"In this scandalous manner the assembly broke up, and the king, irritated by their language, ordered the deputies to be pelted with horse-dung, straw, rotten hay, and the mud of the streets. They

reached their homes with clothes begrimed with filth; the indignities and insults they received were immense."

The causes of the animosity which existed between Gontran and the deputies of Austrasia, are devoid of interest to us, and its consequences terminated with the generation that witnessed its commencement; but the relation in which the king stood to the nobles, their mutual threats and recriminations, and the insulting vengeance which the sovereign took, teach us, what the titles of the actors incessantly lead us to forget, namely, the real character of kings and nobles at that time. We here discover what we ought to understand by "that constitution which has stood unchanged for fourteen centuries, whose stability is so often held up to our admiration;" just as if the monarchy had not been modified by each succeeding generation, and as if there was the slightest resemblance between the prerogatives of Gontran, those of Charlemagne, and those of Louis XIV.

Childebert II. had arrived at man's estate before the death of Gontran; he was endowed with more energy, and, perhaps, with more talent, than had been displayed for a long time by any of the race of Clovis, but he also surpassed his predecessors in ferocity and cruelty. He felt that he was coerced on every side by the Austrasian aristocracy, which had silently usurped all the influence both of the people and of the crown. The country was divided into vast districts, which a few nobles claimed as their property; they parcelled out their land amongst such of their former companions in arms, the Frankic freemen, as consented to take the title of leudes, and to bind themselves by special oaths to second all the enterprises of their lord. With their assistance, these chieftains were sure of always retaining the government of the duchies, although they were nominally in the gift of the king or of the people: by law, every office and dignity was elective, but, in fact, they were all hereditary. Childebert struggled against this aristocracy, sometimes with the aid of his uncle Gontran, but at others he had recourse to the surer expedients of the dagger or the axe. Those nobles who thought themselves the most secure of his friendship were sometimes murdered by his side, in the midst of the gayest festivals: we shudder as we read of the ferocious joy with which he excited the boisterous merriment of duke Magnorald at a bull-fight, whilst the headsman was silently advancing behind him; in the midst of his laughter his head was struck off, and fell into the circus.

A great number of Austrasian nobles perished by the orders of Childebert II.: at the same time, he took possession of the inheritance of his uncle Gontran, and drove the young Chlothaire, who was still governed by his mother Fredegunde, to the very confines of Neustria. He thought that he was securely seated upon his throne; but this can never be the case with a monarch who is hated by an entire people. He escaped a great many secret conspiracies, and repressed as many open revolts; but in 596 he perished by poison, and his murderers were sufficiently wary to escape those inquiries which, indeed, are not very active after the death of a man who is generally detested.

At this epoch, exactly a hundred years after the conversion of Clovis, the warlike nation of the Franks was subject to the government of three kings in their minority, and to the regency of two ambitious and cruel women, equally hardened in crime. In Neustria, Fredegunde was the guardian of Chlothaire, who was then scarcely eleven years old. In Austrasia, and in Burgundy, Brunechilde was the guardian of Theodebert II. and of Thierry, her grandsons—the one ten, the other nine, years old. Brunechilde had probably contributed to inspire her son, Childebert II., with that hatred of the aristocracy, and that ardent desire to crush it by the most violent means, which had at length brought him to the grave. This haughty woman, who was endowed with great talents, great knowledge of mankind, and an invincible firmness of character, had, at various periods of her life, risen above calamities which would have crushed a feebler being. She had been twice married; first to Siegbert, king of Austrasia, secondly to Merovæus, (Meerwig) the son of Chilperic, and both her husbands had fallen by the dagger of assassins commissioned by Fredegunde: she had been the prisoner of her enemies; and she lived in the midst of powerful nobles, who had sworn her ruin. After the death of her son, she was even more fiercely threatened by the dukes of Austrasia, who were angry at not being able to resist her ascendancy, and indignant at her endeavours to corrupt the morals of her grandchildren, in order to govern longer in their stead; but who, spite of all their menaces and reproaches, never failed in the end to acknowledge her remarkable sagacity, and to yield to the authority which she exercised over them. She had long been possessed of extraordinary beauty; and she employed that beauty, (which is ever enhanced by a crown,) to its latest period, as a means of attaching to her service the most

zealous of her partisans. But as she was a grandmother, and even a great-grandmother, before her death, the common arms of women must have become powerless in her hands. "Away from us, O woman!" said duke Ursis to her; "away, or the hoofs of our steeds shall tread thee to earth." But Brunehilde stood her ground: she remained seventeen years in Austrasia after having been thus threatened; she continued to govern men who refused to acknowledge her even as their equal; she laid out the revenues of the kingdom in raising monuments which perpetuated her renown;—for the roads and towers, which long bore her name, might have been taken for Roman works; she vigorously seconded the exertions of pope Gregory the Great, in his missions for the conversion of Britain, which was then divided amongst the Anglo-Saxons; and, if we may believe the letters of the pope, it is to her zealous and constant efforts that England owes the introduction of Christianity. The country which she governed with so much power, soon displayed signs of that prosperity which is always the result of energy united to talent.

But the dukes of Austrasia could not consent to submit; they found means to gain king Theodebert, who was almost imbecile, over to their side, as well as the slave whom Brunehilde had given him as a mistress, and whom he had subsequently married. With his consent, they carried off Brunehilde, in 598, from her palace, and left her alone, on foot, and without money, on the frontier of Burgundy. The haughty queen arrived at the court of the youngest of her grandsons, Thierry II., who reigned at Châlons-sur-Saone, as a suppliant. Her ambition was influenced by an ardent thirst for vengeance; she wished to govern Burgundy, but she wished it chiefly that she might turn its arms against Austrasia, and destroy her other grandson. Years passed ere she had acquired the necessary influence over the mind of Thierry, and over the character of the people: several assassinations were committed, to rid her of such as might have crossed her purposes; but she was still obliged patiently to submit to the open resistance of the Franks to a civil war, and to consent to temporary arrangements which, in her heart, she cursed. After an interval of fourteen years, the wished-for moment of vengeance arrived. In 612, Thierry II. declared war against his brother, and defeated him in two great battles; Theodebert himself fell into his hands, and he was put to death by the pitiless Brunehilde, as well as his infant son Merovæus, whose head

was dashed to pieces against a stone. The triumph, however, of this barbarous queen over her descendants, was shortly followed by her own ruin. Chlothaire II., the son of her mortal enemy, had grown to manhood in an obscure district of Neustria, to which he had been driven by his more powerful cousins. The great lords of Austrasia, and amongst them the ancestors of the house of Charlemagne, who began to distinguish themselves in their paternal possessions on the banks of the Meuse, were incensed at the thought of falling under the yoke of Brunechilde, and they had recourse to Chlothaire II. to effect their deliverance. Thierry II. suddenly died in the midst of his victories; for the terrible science of poisons is the first branch of chemistry which is successfully cultivated by barbarous nations. The army which Brunechilde collected for the defence of her four great-grandsons, to whom she destined the crown, already meditated her destruction. The Austrasians, together with the Burgundians, met the Neustrians between the Marne and the Aisne in 613; but, at the first call of the trumpet to battle, the whole army of Brunechilde either took to flight, or passed over to the enemy's side. The queen herself, with her grand-daughter and her great-grandsons, was brought before Chlothaire II., who immediately condemned to death all the remaining descendants of Clovis, so that he himself was the sole survivor of that race. Brunechilde underwent various torments for three days, and was led about on a camel in the presence of the whole army. Chlothaire afterwards ordered her to be tied by the hair, by one leg, and one arm, to the tail of a wild horse, and abandoned her to the kicks of the frantic animal, so that the fields were strewn with the lacerated limbs of the wretched mother of a line of kings.

CHAPTER XI

Obscurity of the History of the seventh Century.—Want of historical Sources.—Establishment of the Lombards in Italy.—Their rapid Civilization.—Extent of the Frankic Empire under Chlothaire II.; its commercial Prosperity.—Dagobert; his Character, his Cruelties, his Liberalities to the Monks.—St. Eloi and St. Ouen.—Succession of thirteen Faineans Kings; their premature Deaths.—Struggle between the Nobles and the Freemen.—Ebroin.—St. Leger.—Pepin of Heristal.—Battle of Testry.—Change of Dynasty.—Restoration of German Language and Institutions.—The East exhausted by religious Wars and Persecutions.—Greek Emperors.—Wars of Justin II. with Chosroes Nushirvan.—Virtues of Tiberius II.—Talents of Maurice.—His Campaigns against the Avars and the Persians; his Assassination.—Heraclius; his extraordinary Character; his Successes against Persia.

THERE are certain periods in the history of the world, when a thick veil appears to overspread the earth; when all authentic documents and impartial witnesses disappear, and we are at a loss for a clew by which to trace the course of events. We are now arrived at one of these obscure periods—the seventh century; when the historians of the Eastern and Western empires are mute; when vast revolutions are in preparation, or drawing near to their accomplishment, without our having the means of detecting their peculiar circumstances, or their progressive steps. The night which shrouds in one common darkness the history of the Franks or Latins, and that of the Greeks, lasted till the moment when a new and unexpected light broke from Arabia; when a nation of shepherds and robbers appeared as the depositary of letters, after they had been allowed to escape from the guardianship of every civilized people.

The principal historical luminary of the West, after the fall of the Roman empire, was Gregory, bishop of Tours, who died in 595. His ecclesiastical history, carried down to the year 591, is the only source from which, notwithstanding his ignorance and intolerance, and the want of order in his narrative, we derive any knowledge of the manners, the opinions, and the form of government of the period of which he treats. After him, another author, far more barbarous, and more concise, whose name

is believed to have been Fredegaire, continued the history of the Franks to the year 641; and he, like his predecessor, has shed a feeble light, not only upon Gaul, but upon Germany, Italy, and Spain. After Fredegaire, nothing is to be found which deserves the name of history, until the time of Charlemagne. A century and a half passed away, during which we possess nothing concerning the whole empire of the West, except dates and conjectures.

For the East, in like manner, after the disappearance of the great light thrown upon history by the two contemporaries of Justinian,—Procopius and Agathias,—our only resource is the narrative of Theophylact Simocatta, which is diffuse, without being complete; inflated and loaded with superfluous ornaments, while it is barren of facts; and, as it ends about the year 603, we are then obliged to descend to the chronicles and abstracts of Theophanes and Nicephorus, both of whom died after Charlemagne, and who resemble each other in being occupied solely with chronology, not with the causes or effects of events.

This long and almost unknown period was not, however, without importance either in the East or in the West. Italy, under the dominion of the Lombards, whose first historian, Paul Warnefrid, was contemporary with Charlemagne, slowly recovered from its calamities. The Lombard kings, who were at first elective, and afterwards hereditary, showed some respect for the liberty of their subjects, whether of Roman or Teutonic origin. Their laws, considered as the laws of a barbarous people, were wise and equal; their dukes, or provincial rulers, early acquired a sentiment of pride and independence, which made them seek support in the affection of their subjects.

We shall not here set forth the chronology of the one and twenty Lombard kings, who succeeded each other during the space of two hundred and six years—from the conquest of Alboin in 568, to the renewal of their monarchy by Charlemagne in 774. Their names would soon escape from the memory, and their history is not circumstantial enough for us to fix them in our minds by reflections suggested by facts. We only know, that during this period, the population of Italy began once more to increase; that the race of the conquerors took root and throve in the soil, without entirely superseding that of the conquered natives, whose language still prevailed; that the rural districts were cultivated anew,

and towns rebuilt—particularly Pavia, the capital of the kingdom, and Benevento, the capital of the most powerful duchy of Lombardy, extending over great part of the kingdom of Naples;—that those arts which sweeten life were once more exercised by the inhabitants of Italy; and that the Lombards, who began their career of civilization later than the Franks, outstripped them in it, and soon brought themselves to consider their neighbours as barbarians.

This period would be still more important in the history of the Franks, if it were better known. Chlothaire II., the son of Chilperic, and the great grandchild of Clovis, had been proclaimed king, in 613, by the whole monarchy. His power extended not only over all the Gauls to the Pyrennees, but was acknowledged throughout Germany, even by those Saxons whom Charlemagne had afterwards so much difficulty in subduing. The kingdom of the Franks had become the boundary of the new empire which the Avars had established in Transylvania and Hungary, and which, at Constantinople, threatened the Greeks with total ruin. During the fifteen years of his reign over this vast Frankish empire, (A. D. 613—628,) Chlothaire seems to have been little disturbed by foreign war. He reposed upon his strength, his neighbours feared him, and the Lombards themselves had consented to pay him a tribute. From the number of temples and convents with which the piety of Chlothaire and his son covered the kingdom, and from the silk, stuffs, and jewellery with which these buildings were decorated, it appears that the arts had made considerable progress in Gaul. Commerce had also acquired fresh activity: a desire for the spices of the Indies, and the manufactures of Greece, was universally felt by those magnates among the Franks whose wants were not satisfied by the natural products of their immense domains. Some of these chiefs undertook to carry on trade with arms in their hands, and to establish a communication between France and Greece by the valley of the Danube. The merchants set out from Bavaria, which was at the extremity of the empire of the Franks, and advanced to the Euxine, passing between the Avars and the Bulgarians, incessantly threatened with pillage, but always ready to defend with the sword the convoys which they escorted across those wild countries. A Frank merchant, by name Samo, was conspicuous for bravery in protecting these caravans: he rendered important services to the Venedi, a Slayonic people, who inhabited Bohe--

mia; they rewarded him by making him their king, in which office he continued thirty-five years.

But notwithstanding the vast extent of the Frankic empire, the royal authority was hardly felt out of the presence of the king. All the Germanic nations had hereditary dukes, who paid an obedience, scarcely more than nominal, to Chlothaire, and his successor Dagobert. The southern provinces of Gaul were governed by the authority of their dukes, whom the king undoubtedly possessed the right of changing, but whom, in fact, he rarely ventured to dismiss. It was only in the two provinces of Austrasia and Neustria that he felt himself completely king. He resided in the latter, generally at Paris; and, to maintain his authority in the former, he sent thither the elder of his sons, Dagobert, whom he created king in 622, when this young prince was but fifteen years of age. Dagobert fixed his residence at Metz, under the protection of Arnolf and Pepin, two of the most powerful lords of Austrasia beyond the Rhine, and ancestors of the Carlovingian line.

In 628, Chlothaire II. died, and Dagobert succeeded him. Chlothaire allotted the kingdom of Aquitaine to a younger son, named Charibert, whom he had by another wife; but he did not retain it. Dagobert had sole dominion over the empire of the Franks from 628 to 638, and exercised a degree of power almost equal to that which Charlemagne possessed at a later period.

Dagobert is described as having qualities which it is impossible to reconcile: first, we hear of his extreme moderation, of his mildness, of his deference to the authority of Pepin and St. Arnolf, bishop of Metz; yet, at the very same period, we find him causing the assassination of Chrodoald, one of the dukes of Bavaria, who had been powerfully recommended to him by his father. Mention is made of a progress which he undertook throughout his kingdom on taking possession of it, and of the manifestations of his love of justice and humanity; but let us attend to the words of Fredegair himself. "From thence he took the road for Dijon and St. Jean de Losne, where he abode for some days, with a firm resolution to judge the people of his kingdom according to justice. Full of this beneficent desire, he yielded not his eyes to sleep, nor did he satisfy himself with food; having no other object of his thoughts, than the hope that all might retire from his presence satisfied after having obtained justice. The same day, when he was leaving St. Jean de Losne for Châ-

lons, he went into the bath before it was well day; and, at the same time, he ordered Brodulf, the uncle of his brother Charibert, to be put to death." The same historian declares Brodulf to have been one of the most estimable men of his kingdom.

In like manner, we are told of his wisdom, and the purity of his morals; but, it is added, that a great change took place in this respect within the first year of his reign, when, according to Fredegaire, "he gave himself up to voluptuousness, and had, like king Solomon, three queens and a great number of concubines. The queens were Nantechilde, Wolfegonde, and Berchilde; as for the names of the mistresses, as they were very numerous, I have shrunk from the fatigue of inserting them in this chronicle."

Two cruel actions of Dagobert, which are not accounted for, have left a deeper stain upon his memory than the licentiousness of his manners. On the death of his brother, he caused his nephew, who was still a child, to be killed, lest he should one day claim his inheritance. The other is a deed of still greater atrocity: in one night he massacred nine thousand Bulgarians to whom he had granted hospitality, lest his sheltering them should give offence to the Avars, from whose sword these unhappy fugitives had escaped.

Dagobert was the benefactor of the abbey of St. Denis, and the founder of a great number of rich convents. Of course, his piety has been celebrated by the monks: but it was piety according to the interpretation of the seventh century, and displayed itself in nothing but in the largesses he bestowed on convents. This piety had united Dagobert to two saints whom France still venerates, though little acquainted with their claims to canonization. The first was St. Eloi, the king's jeweller; who, under his eyes, and according to his orders, made all the ornaments of the church of St. Denis, and who thought himself permitted to commit saintly robbery upon the royal treasury, in order to enrich the convent of Solignac, which he himself had founded. The second was St. Ouen, formerly referendary of the court, afterwards bishop of Rouen. Dagobert lived alternately with these two holy men, whose counsels he blindly followed; with the monks of St. Denis, in whose choir he sang; and among his numerous mistresses. His devotion to St. Denis was so exclusive, that he several times countenanced the pillage of other churches in his states, in order to enrich his favourite saint.

At the death of Dagobert begins the succession of the *Fainéans* kings, which lasted for a hundred and fourteen years, (A. D. 638—752,) during which period thirteen sovereigns reigned successively over the whole of France, or over a part of that monarchy; though only two of them attained to man's estate, and not one to the full development of his intellectual powers. The great justiciary, the Mord Dom, commonly called the mayor of the palace, and whose office had been instituted at a very early period in the three monarchies of Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgundy, could not, like the king, be a minor or an idiot, since he was elected by the people. The increase of his power was commensurate to the incapacity of his nominal chief. The minority of the two sons of Dagobert afforded a favourable opportunity to the mayor of making himself known to the nation, and of increasing his own influence. The inactivity in which the sovereign lived, the corrupting influence of power, and the example of his predecessors, soon led him into the most shameless excesses. There was not a Merovingian king that was not a father before the age of fifteen, and decrepit at thirty. This great stipendiary of the nation, who took no part in the government, except in as much as the uncontrolled disposal of the lands and estates of the crown was concerned, lived in a state of continual intoxication: he was known to his subjects only by his vices; yet the rapidity with which one child succeeded another upon the throne, appears to have excited no suspicions in the minds of the Franks as to the causes of this constant recurrence of premature deaths.

A new subject of discussion began about this time to divide the Frankic nation: the small land-owners, who were called *Arimans*, or freemen, had hitherto allowed the nobles and the dukes to usurp their rights. They had for a long while submitted to be plundered, one by one; and had even aided the cause of their oppressors, becoming their leudes or followers, upon a promise of mutual assistance. But, about the middle of the seventh century, some more open aggression on the part of the nobles, or some more audacious attempts to rob the freemen of their estates and of their rights, drove them to combine for their common defence. They had already given up the struggle in Austrasia, where the family of Charlemagne (which, as it has no other name, we shall henceforward style the Carlovingian race) was at the head of the high aristocracy. This family had ac-

quired immense power; and had succeeded in rallying the majority of the freemen around its standard, in the capacity of leudes: in Neustria, on the contrary, the freemen had preserved their independence; they attended the national assemblies, and decided the election of the Mord Dom, who seems to have been appointed for the express purpose of protecting the lower orders, and who was, perhaps, chosen from their ranks, like the *Justiza* of Arragon. In 656, they succeeded in raising Ebroin to this important station; a man of great talents and energy, and a determined foe to the increasing influence of the aristocracy, whose sole object, as judge, as general, and as statesman, was to weaken the dukes, and to ruin the nobles.

The two factions soon perceived that it was expedient to extend their alliances from one kingdom to the other. The freemen of Austrasia, being oppressed by the mayor Wulfoad, who was of a ducal family, had recourse to the protection of Ebroin, and frequently joined his standard: whilst the dukes of Neustria and Burgundy, and the leader of their party, Leger, bishop of Autun, intrigued against Ebroin, and kept up a correspondence with the nobles of Austrasia. They turned their attention particularly towards young Pepin of Heristal, maternal grandson of Pepin, the minister of Dagobert, and grandfather of Pepin le Bref, king of France. The administration of Ebroin (A. D. 656—689) was marked by frequent wars in both the kingdoms. Several kings were deposed on both sides, although, from their tender age, they had scarcely taken any other part in passing events than the giving them the sanction of their name. The nobility, however, were not satisfied with dethroning a sovereign who was displeasing to them. Their victories in Austrasia and Neustria were followed by regicide. Dagobert II. was attacked by the nobles in Austrasia, in 678, and being condemned by a council, was put to death. St. Wilfrid, who had offered him hospitality in his infancy, was arrested by the army of Austrasians who returned from accomplishing this revolution; and a bishop who recognised him, addressed him thus:—"With what rash confidence do you venture to traverse the land of the Franks, you, who are worthy of death for having contributed to send back from his exile that king, who was the destroyer of our cities, and the contemner of his nobles' counsels; who, like Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, oppressed the people with exactions; who respected not the churches of God, nor the bishops.—Now he

has paid the penalty of his crimes; he is slain, and his body lies unburied on the earth."

The same party, headed by the bishops and nobles, were equally merciless to Childeric II. At the period when this Neustrian king arrived at the age of twenty-one, and gave himself up to that unbridled love of pleasure which was the hereditary propensity of his race, Ebroin, and Leger, bishop of Autun, who were the chiefs of the two parties, were confined in the same convent at Luxeuil, the superior of which had compelled them to be reconciled. But, within the walls of a cloister, the holy bishop did not abandon the cause of his party. He planned a conspiracy, of which his brother Gaerin was the leader. Childeric II. was surprised (in 673) as he was hunting in the forest of Livry, and, with his wife and infant son, put to death. This seemed to confirm the power of the aristocracy. Ebroin, however, who had been released at the time of the Revolution, found means to reassemble an army of freemen, and surprised the nobles at Pont St. Maxence: he defeated them several times, and took prisoner almost all those who had borne a part in the death of Childeric II., which he avenged by putting them to the torture. St. Leger, after being exposed to cruel torments, was preserved alive; his biographers assert that all his wounds closed instantaneously and miraculously, and that, when his lips and tongue were slit, he spoke with greater eloquence than before. Deprived of sight, and mutilated in all his limbs, St. Leger was already venerated as a martyr by the people. Ebroin's anger redoubled, when he perceived that all the evil he had inflicted on his enemy redounded to his glory. He resolved to have St. Leger degraded by the bishops of France, whom he assembled in council in 678, and cited the saint to confess before all the prelates that he was an accomplice in the murder of Childeric II. The holy St. Leger neither chose to stain the close of his life by an act of perjury, nor to bring upon himself new sufferings by avowing his participation in the regicide; he, therefore, made no other answer to all the questions put to him, than that God alone could read the secrets of his heart. The bishops, being able to extort no other answer from him, tore his tunic from top to bottom, as a mark of degradation, and delivered him up to the count of the palace, who ordered him to be beheaded. The commemoration of the martyrdom of the holy regicide is kept on the 2d of October; and

there are few of the cities of France in which some church has not been raised in honour of him.

After the death of Ebroin, which took place in 681, the mayors, who were appointed his successors by the free party, possessed neither the same energy nor the same talent. War was renewed between Austrasia and Neustria. From the time of the murder of Dagobert II., the former had been without a king, and had obeyed Pepin of Heristal, who took the title of duke, and governed with the assistance of the nobility. A great battle was fought between the two nations and the two parties in 687, at Testry, in Vermandois. The nobles were triumphant. The mayor of the freemen was killed, and their king, Thierry III., fell into the hands of the nobles. Pepin, who thought it still necessary that there should be the phantom of a king, instead of dethroning him, attached him to his own party, and caused him to be acknowledged in Austrasia, as well as in Neustria, at the same time retaining all authority in his own hands. He elevated his son to the dignity of mayor of Neustria, and reduced the king to the condition of captive of his own subject.

The great revolution, which transmitted the sovereignty of the Franks from the first to the second race, takes its date from the battle of Testry. In the year 687, the royal power was vested in the second Pepin, although his grandson, the third of the name, was the first who assumed the crown. (A. D. 752.) This revolution has been erroneously considered as a usurpation on the part of the mayors of the palace: it was, on the contrary, their defeat; their old adversaries were victorious, and decorated themselves with their title. The *Mord Dom*, or elective head of the freemen, chief magistrate of Neustria, and representative of a country in which the Franks had begun to blend with the Romans and adopt their language, gave place to the hereditary duke of Austrasia, captain of his *leudes*, or men voluntarily devoted to a service equally hereditary, and requited by grants of land. This duke was seconded by all the other dukes who fought for aristocracy, and against royalty and the people. His victory was signalized by a second triumph of the Teutonic language over the Latin; by the re-establishment of diets or assemblies of the nation, which were, from that period, held in a far more regular manner, and gradually got possession of all the rights of sovereignty; but in which the nobles alone represented the na-

tion: lastly, by the almost entire dissolution of the national bond. The dukes who had seconded Pepin had in view, not to become his subjects, but to reign conjointly with him; accordingly, all the nations beyond the Rhine renounced their obedience to the Franks: Aquitaine, Provence, and Burgundy, governed by their several dukes, became, in some sort, foreign provinces; and Pepin, satisfied with leaving either his son or one of his lieutenants at Paris to watch the king, transported the actual seat of government to his duchy of Austrasia, and fixed his residence by turns at Cologne, and at Heristal, near Liege.

It was towards the close of the administration of Pepin of Heristal that the Musulmans began to threaten Western Europe. They conquered Spain, between the years 711 and 714, and Pepin died on the 16th of December, 714, after having governed France twenty-seven years and a half, from the day of the battle of Testry. But, before we attempt to trace the rise and progress of the Musulman empire: before we examine how Charles Martel, the son of Pepin, saved the West from their dominion, we must follow the obscure revolutions of the Eastern empire up to the time when her mortal struggle with the invaders began.

It is not the only disadvantage attending the study of the arid period which now engages our attention, that we are forced to carry our eyes over the whole world, from its eastern to its western bounds, and to pass in review persons who had no relation to each other. The brief chronicles to which we are reduced, devoid of all historical criticism or judgment, heap up before our eyes events of which we cannot see the connexion, and which appear rather to contradict than to support each other; becoming, of course, difficult to remember, in proportion to their barrenness and obscurity.

The history of the East, during the five reigns of Justin II., Tiberius II., Maurice, Phocas, and Heraclius, (A. D. 567—642,) presents us rather with the phantoms of a bad dream than with a train of real events. The three former, it is true, offer a contrast in which we ought to be accustomed,—that of sovereigns virtuous, or represented as being so, and a miserable people. It is, indeed, generally thus that the historians of monarchies have performed their tasks. But the tyranny of Phocas, the defeats and afterwards the victories of Heraclius, have no resemblance to any course of events with which we are acquainted, and afford no internal explanation. In a war, of which the details are

wholly unknown to us, the Persians, under the orders of Chosroes II., conquered all the Asian provinces of the Eastern empire. Heraclius, in his turn, conquered the whole of Persia, up to the frontiers of India; and, after expeditions, the narratives of which wear the air of fables, the two empires, equally exhausted, were unable to contend with a new enemy, whose existence they had not even suspected.

Though reduced to conjecture as to the origin of these sudden revolutions, we can, at least, discover, that a great cause of weakness had arisen in the Eastern empire, along with the new systems of religious belief, and the unrelenting persecutions they engendered. The minds of men became irritated against each other, and ill-disposed towards their government. The oppressed sects not only refused to defend their country,—they intrigued with their country's enemies, and delivered into their hands the strongest and richest provinces of the empire. In the discussions on the mysteries of the Christian faith must be sought the key to the Persian and Musulman conquests.

The groundwork of the new revolutions which broke out at the end of the sixth century was laid in the reign of Justinian. The ancient dispute between the catholics and the Arians concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ had been succeeded by others far more frivolous and unintelligible, more foreign to all human actions, and to the influence of faith upon conduct,—those concerning the union of the two natures and two wills in the person of the Saviour.

It was not without reason that the question, whether the Redeemer was God, or whether he was a created being, was regarded as fundamental in the Christian religion. For, according to the explanation given of this mystery, one sect reproached the other with refusing, if not to Deity itself, certainly to one of its manifestations, the worship which is its due; while the opposing sect accused its adversaries of violating the first of the commandments, the very basis of religion, by adoring him who had expressly taught them to worship the Father only, the King of kings. But, though the dogma of the divinity of Christ had prevailed in the catholic church, the explanation of the incomprehensible union of the Deity with man was absolutely null as to its consequences: it might be enounced in words, but human reason was unable to grasp it; still less could it have any effect in guiding the actions of men.

Nevertheless, two explanations of this mystery had been brought forward; the one, that of the *Monophysites*, represented the Deity as being the soul which animated the human body of Jesus Christ. According to this system, the soul of the Saviour possessed but one nature, and that divine; his body, also, was of one nature, and that human. This system, which did not escape the charge of heresy, had been embraced by Justinian, and, more warmly still by his wife Theodora, in whom licentiousness and cruelty had not extinguished theological zeal. The bishops, the monks, and the laity, who refused to subscribe to it, were exposed to a bloody persecution. The orthodox system, on the contrary, acknowledged in Jesus Christ the union of two complete natures; that is, of the human soul and human body of Jesus the son of Mary, with the divine soul and divine body of the Christ, one of the three persons of the Deity. These two complete and distinct beings were, however, so intimately united, that nothing could be attributed to the Man, which was not, at the same time, attributed to the God.

From this explanation, arose a new dispute about words. It was asked, whether this twofold Being was animated by a single will; the divine soul prevailing so completely over the human, as undividedly to govern the actions of Christ. In the opinion of the *Monothelites* it was so. This was declared heretical, and the orthodox dogma was established, that the human soul of Jesus had a full and entire will, but that it remained in perpetual conformity to the full and entire will of the divine soul of Christ.

With the utmost stretch of attention, we are scarcely able to seize these subtle distinctions, which aim at setting in opposition unknown causes, whose effects are always the same. The examination of them fatigues the reason, and appears a sort of blasphemy against that inscrutable Being, who is thus submitted to a kind of moral dissection. With more difficulty still should we pursue the different shades of these opinions, and all the various sects to which they gave rise. But the influence of these subtle questions was fatal to the empire: every sect persecuted in its turn, and the orthodox,—that is to say, the victorious—abused, more cruelly than the others, the power which they were longer able to retain. The first dignitaries of the church were expelled from their seats; many perished in exile, many in prison, many were even sentenced to death. Those who held the forbidden opinions were denied the liberty of worship; while the property of the condemned churches was seized, and thousands of monks,

fighting with staves and stones, excited tumults in which rivers of blood was shed. Large towns were given up to pillage, and to all the outrages of a brutal soldiery; and all this as a punishment for an attachment to words rather than to ideas. At the end of the sixth century, the greater part of the empire, especially the eastern, longed for a foreign deliverer,—even for the yoke of a heathen or a magian, so that they might escape from the intolerance of the orthodox party and of the emperors.

The Nestorians, who carried farther than the orthodox themselves the separation between the two natures; who placed in stronger opposition than the catholics the Man Jesus and the God Christ, were the first objects of persecution: they completely abandoned the empire, and several hundred thousands of the subjects of Justinian emigrated into Persia, carrying with them arts and manufactures, and a knowledge of Roman tactics and engines of war. The conquests of Chosroes were seconded by their arms, and by the treachery of their secret adherents, who delivered up to the enemy several of the fortresses of Asia.

The Eutychians, the most zealous of the Monophysites, who, in order to maintain the unity of Christ's nature, denied that his divine soul had been invested with a human body, were crushed by persecution. They have survived only in Armenia, where their church flourishes to this day: but this heresy destroyed the ancient attachment of the Armenians to the Greeks, and produced in these old allies of the empire an implacable hatred, which has also been perpetuated. A modified sect of Monophysites, the Jacobites, sought refuge in Persia, in Arabia, and in Upper Egypt. They, too, united with the enemies of their country. In the mountains of Lebanon, the Monothelites, or those who admit only one will in Christ, raised the standard of revolt. These are still known by the name of Maronites. The Monophysites, who were oppressed and destroyed in the rest of the empire, raised an invincible resistance in Egypt, where the whole mass of the people shared their opinions. But these people, persecuted, stripped, and doomed to see the dignities of their church, their own possessions, and all their civil rights, torn from them, gave up at once the language of the Greeks, and their adherence to its church. Then arose the Coptic sect, and its independent church, which spread over Abyssinia and Nubia. They seconded with all their might the arms of Chosroes; and when he, in his turn, was conquered, they implored the aid of the Musulmans.

Such was the state of the East, and such were the only passions

which seemed to agitate the people, during the five reigns which filled the interval from the death of Justinian, in 567, to the conquests of the Musulmans, in 632. We shall now give a succinct account of these five reigns, on which our scanty materials would not permit us to enlarge, even if we desired it.

The sceptre of Justinian had been transmitted, in 567, to his nephew Justin II., a prince of a mild and benevolent disposition, but weak: he saw the errors of his uncle's administration, and promised to remedy them; but he was constantly confined to his palace by bodily infirmity, and surrounded by women and eunuchs. Counsellors like these gave to his government a character of intrigue, of feebleness, of distrust. During his reign, Italy was lost by the conquest of the Lombards. The Avars, being driven by the aboriginal Turks from the neighbourhood of Thibet, and becoming conquerors as soon as they had passed from Asia into Europe, had founded their empire in the valley of the Danube, nearly on the same spot which Attila had formerly chosen as the seat of his government. From thence they extended their devastations throughout the Illyrian peninsula. Towards the end of the reign of the great Chosroes Nushirvan, the Persians carried their ravages to the very outskirts of Antioch, and reduced to ashes the city of Apamea. At the end of his reign, however, Justin II. realized the hopes which he had excited at its commencement. He chose a successor, not in his own family, but in his people. Finding in the captain of his guards, Tiberius, the most virtuous, brave, and humane of his subjects, he raised him to the crown in December, 574, and resigned to him the reins of government, without any attempt, during the four years which he survived this act of abdication, to recover the power he had resigned.

It is supposed that the empress Sophia, wife of Justin II., had some influence upon the choice of her husband. Tiberius was not only the bravest, but the handsomest of the courtiers. It was not known that he was married; and though Justin, as he placed him on the throne, said, "Reverence the empress Sophia as your mother," Sophia is thought to have indulged a hope that she should attach him to herself by a different tie, and should bestow her hand, as well as a crown, upon the new emperor. But Tiberius now brought forward his wife Anastasia, whose existence had been hitherto concealed. From this time he strove, by his respectful attentions and filial affection to the empress, to make her forget the mortification she had endured. He found excuses

for her resentment, and pardoned even the conspiracies into which her irritation led her; and he granted,—what was then without example in the history of the empire,—a complete amnesty to all those who had taken up arms and proclaimed another emperor, as well as to the rival whom they had decorated with the purple. The reign of Tiberius is the first, since the conversion of Constantine, which gives us an idea of Christian virtues adorning the throne:—mildness, moderation, patience, charity.—Unhappily, this excellent prince survived Justin only four years: but, finding himself attacked by a mortal disease, he chose, in the same way in which he had been chosen,—not one of his family, but the man he thought most worthy, to inherit the supreme power. The successor and adopted son of Tiberius was Maurice, (A. D. 582—602,) a general who had commanded the army in the war against the Persians. He was then forty-three years of age; and, though his virtue was less pure than that of his predecessor, and his character had some taint of pride, of cruelty, of weakness, and of avarice, he was, nevertheless, worthy of the preference which had been given to him.

Maurice, who owed his elevation to his military character, and who had so deeply studied the art of war as to write a treatise upon tactics which has come down to our own time, did not attempt to lead his armies in person; so completely had the effeminate life of Constantinople rendered the profession of the soldier incompatible with the dignity of the sovereign. He opposed but a feeble resistance to the Lombards, and was satisfied with merely strengthening the garrisons in the small number of towns which he still held in Italy. His most formidable enemy, therefore, was Baian, the Khan of the Avars, (A. D. 570—600,) who seemed to have taken Attila for his model, and occupied his country, if not his palace. In the vast plains of Bulgaria, of Wallachia, and Pannonia, where he prevented all cultivation of the earth, it was almost impossible for a regular army to check or chastise the ravages of his wandering troops: they penetrated with impunity into the richest provinces of the empire, and almost every year carried terror to the walls of Constantinople; plundering, in their course, the treasures of the Greeks, and carrying off thousands of captives. After having insolently bartered peace for a tribute, and insulted the messengers of the emperor in his own country,—insulted Constantinople through the lips of her own ambassadors,—Baian made it his sport to violate the treaties which he had sworn to keep.

The relations of Maurice with the Persian empire were more advantageous. The great Chosroes Nushirvan had died in 579, having lived upwards of eighty years. His son, Hormouz, who succeeded him, (A. D. 579—590,) rendered himself odious by every vice which could exhaust the patience even of orientals. His avarice disgusted the troops; his caprice degraded the satraps of Persia, and his pretended justice had immolated, as he himself boasted, thirteen thousand victims. An insurrection broke out against him in the principal provinces of Persia: Maurice seconded it by sending a Roman army into Mesopotamia and Assyria; the Turks of Thibet advanced at the same time into Khorasan and Bactriana; and the monarchy of the Persians seemed already on the brink of ruin. Bahram, or Varanes, a general who had distinguished himself, under Nushirvan, by his skill and valour, saved the state by disobeying the orders of Hormouz. Alone, he undertook the wars against the Turks and against the Romans: he conquered the former, and, although he was less fortunate in his enterprise against the latter, he still preserved his influence over the Persians. Hormouz having sent him an insulting message, implying that his services were no longer wanted, he raised the standard of revolt, took his sovereign prisoner, and exhibited to Persia the unwonted sight of a public trial, at which the captive son of Nushirvan pleaded his own cause before the nobles of the land. The unfortunate prince was, by their orders, deposed, blinded, and cast into prison, where he was strangled a short time afterwards by a personal enemy. (A. D. 590.)

One party among the Persians wished to transmit the crown to Chosroes II., son of Hormouz; but Bahram refused to recognise him, and he was obliged to flee at the peril of his life, and to take refuge with the Romans. Maurice received the fugitive in a manner no less politic than generous, and spared him the fatigue and humiliation of a journey to Constantinople. He collected a considerable army on the frontiers of Armenia and Syria, the command of which he intrusted to Narses, a general of Persian origin, who is not to be confounded with the conqueror of Italy. The popular passions of the Persians were already kindled for a counter-revolution; the magi had declared themselves against Bahram; an army of the partisans of Chosroes had joined that of the Romans, which advanced to Zab on the frontiers of Media; and the standards of the declining empire pene-

trated into regions which the Roman eagles had never beheld, either during the republic, or the reign of Trajan. Bahram was conquered in two battles, and perished in the eastern extremity of Persia: Chosroes was seated upon the throne, and, according to the custom of oriental despots, he cemented his restoration with the blood of numerous victims. He, however, still retained the army of auxiliaries with which Maurice had furnished him. He assumed the title of adopted son of the Roman emperor; he restored several contested fortresses to Maurice; he granted to the Christians of Persia that liberty of conscience which the magi had always refused them; and the Greeks exulted in the part they had taken in this revolution, as one of the most fortunate occurrences in their history.

They soon perceived, however, that a solid alliance must be based upon the friendship of nations, not merely on that of sovereigns. In the month of October, 602, Maurice attempted to reduce the pay of his soldiers, and to make them winter in the country of the Avars; a sedition instantly broke out, and the infuriated soldiers invested with the purple one of their centurions, named Phocas, who was only distinguished by the violence of his imprecations against the emperor. The monarch still hoped to defend himself in Constantinople: but the people were no less exasperated at his parsimony than the army, and received him with a shower of stones. A monk ran through the streets sword in hand, denouncing him as the object of the wrath of God. Maurice, however, was accused of no heresy; and, in an age where the affairs of the church were mingled with those of the state, he alone seems to have kept aloof from ecclesiastical quarrels. He fled to Chalcedonia, where he was soon taken by the officers of Phocas, who had just entered Constantinople in triumph. His five sons were butchered before his eyes: he himself perished the last; and the six heads were exposed to the insults of the populace in the Hippodrome of Constantinople. A few months afterwards, the widow of Maurice and his three daughters were slaughtered in the same manner: but this was only the prelude to the execrable tyranny which Phocas was about to exercise over the empire for eight years, (A. D. 602—610,) during a reign not less remarkable for atrocity than those of Nero and Caligula.

Chosroes might, possibly, consider himself bound in gratitude to avenge the prince who had restored him to his throne. Be

that as it may, his policy eagerly seized this pretext for declaring war on the Romans; and the most opulent cities of the empire were laid waste by the sword of the Persians, to expiate a crime in which they had in nowise participated. Chosroes II. employed several campaigns in rendering himself master of the border towns; and, as long as Phocas reigned, he did not pass the limits of the Euphrates. But Phocas himself fell; the crime which Chosroes affected to avenge, met its punishment: Heraclius, son of the exarch of Carthage, sailed with an African fleet, and was received in the port of Constantinople on the 5th of October, 610, with the title of Augustus. Phocas was given over to the most cruel tortures, and was afterwards beheaded; but the new emperor in vain demanded of the Persian monarch a restoration of that peace between the two empires, which he had now no just cause for withholding.

It was precisely at this period that Chosroes, leaving the shores of the Euphrates, undertook the conquest of the Roman empire; whilst Heraclius, whose long reign, (A. D. 610—642,) we are only acquainted with through imperfect documents, passed twelve years in a state of inactivity and depression, which forms a strange contrast with the brilliant expeditions by which he afterwards distinguished himself. In 611, Chosroes occupied the most important cities of Syria,—Hierapolis, Chalcis, Beræa, and Aleppo. He took Antioch, the capital of the East; Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia, fell shortly afterwards. Chosroes devoted several campaigns to the conquest of Roman Asia; but history does not furnish us with the details of any battle offered to check his progress, nor of any obstinate siege, nor with the name of any Roman general, distinguished even by his reverses. In 614, Palestine was invaded by the Persian armies; Jerusalem opened its gates; the churches were pillaged, 90,000 Christians were massacred, and the fire of the magi succeeded to the worship which had been offered on the altars of the true God. In 616, Egypt was also conquered: the Persians advanced into the deserts of Libya, and destroyed the remains of the ancient Greek colony of Cyrene, in the neighbourhood of Tripoli. During the same year, another army crossed Asia Minor, to Chalcedonia, which yielded after a long siege; and a Persian army maintained its position for ten years, within sight of Constantinople, on the Bosphorus of Thrace. The whole empire seemed to be reduced within the walls of the capital; for, about the same time, the

Avars recommenced their ravages with more ferocity than ever, and occupied or laid waste the whole European continent, down to the long wall, which, at a distance of only thirty miles from Constantinople, separated that extremity of Thrace from the mainland. Certain maritime towns, sprinkled at vast distances over all the coasts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, still recognised the nominal authority of the emperors; but their own situation was so precarious, that they could neither furnish money nor troops for distant expeditions. The final overthrow of the throne of Heraclius seemed only to be deferred for a few years.

Then it was that the man, whose effeminate habits and depressed spirits had hitherto inspired nothing but contempt, all at once displayed the vigour of a young soldier, the energy of a hero, and the talents of a conqueror. The meagre chronicles which relate the annals of the reign of Heraclius, neither explain his successes, nor throw light on his previous reverses: they neither tell us why he seemed to slumber for twelve years upon a throne which was crumbling to dust beneath him, nor why he suddenly awoke, in all the greatness of his energy, to crush the Persians in the course of six years, (A. D. 622—627;), nor how he came to relapse into the same apathy, and to lose, by the arms of the Musulmans, during the last fourteen years of his reign, all that he had before regained. (A. D. 628—642.)

Reduced, as we are, to a merely conjectural solution of this historical problem, we are led to imagine that the reverses of the empire were owing to the universal discontent of its subjects; to the prevalence of religious animosities, and to a resentment for unjust persecution, which induced the heretics of every province to desire a bold avenger even more than a good king. But after the Monophysites, the Monothelites, the Eutychians, the Nestorians, the Jacobites, and the Maronites, had gratified their hatred of the church and of the state by delivering their fortresses and their country into the hands of the magi, the ruin of their former enemy soon ceased to console them for their present oppression. They regretted that national independence and that country which they had lost; they appealed to that Heraclius whom they had betrayed. The emperor had been destined by nature for the part of a great man; and, although the pomp of royalty, the influence of courtiers, eunuchs, and women, had lulled him in the lap of luxury, he readily perceived the real weakness of an empire whose resources were weakened by conquest. He

saw that it was impossible for the Persian armies, which were dispersed over the immense extent of the Roman provinces, to arrive in time to succour each other; that they must be in constant dread of a rebellion; and that the troops would not dare to leave their remote quarters to support the central forces. Instead of attacking the Persian army, which lay before his eyes in Chalcedonia, at the very gates of his capital, he embarked with all the soldiers he could muster, and landed in Cilicia, at the angle which Asia Minor forms with Syria. Ten years of magian oppression had taught the inhabitants to regret the sway of the Eastern empire. Heraclius re-enforced his army with such of the natives as had courage to shake off the yoke. Instead of seeking to meet the Persians, he attempted to cut them off in their rear; and, with a degree of skill and boldness which deserves to be better known, he long avoided them, and ravaged the very countries which they had left behind them. Whilst the whole empire of the East was occupied by the Persians, he led the Roman armies into the heart of Persia: he even penetrated into regions of whose existence the Greeks had hitherto been ignorant, and where no European conqueror had ever set foot. After having laid waste the shores of the Caspian Sea, he successively attacked, took, and burned, the several capitals of Chosroes, even as far as Ispahan: he extinguished the eternal fire of the magi; he loaded his troops with an enormous booty; and he retaliated on Persia the same disasters which Chosroes had, for ten years, inflicted upon the empire.

Heraclius did not cease to offer peace, even in the midst of this career of destruction: while the haughty monarch as constantly rejected it in the midst of his disasters and defeats. The Persians at length refused to submit to the extreme sufferings which were the consequences of his obstinacy and of his weakness. An insurrection broke out against the king on the 25th of February, 628, and Chosroes was assassinated, with eighteen of his sons. One only of his offspring, Siroes, was allowed to live, and to occupy his father's throne. Peace was restored between Constantinople and Persia; and the ancient boundaries of the two empires on the Euphrates were recognised by both parties. But the whole of Asia had been devastated by this double invasion: and the conqueror, who, mean time, was gathering strength in Arabia, met with but slight resistance, when, in the following year, (629,) he began to inundate the exhausted land with the victorious torrent of the Musulman armies.

CHAPTER XIII.

Physical Geography of Arabia.—Yemen.—Republics of the Red Sea.—Arab Character, Institutions, Poetry, and Religion.—Worship of the Kaaba at Mecca.—Birth of Mahommed.—His Marriage.—His Religious studies.—Publication of the Koran.—Character of his Religion.—His Public Preaching.—His early Disciples.—Irritation of the Inhabitants of Mecca.—Flight of Mahommed to Medina; Hegira, or Era of the Musulman Religion.—Commencement of his Reign.—His military Talents.—Conquest of Mecca.—Conquest of the rest of Arabia.—Declaration of War with the Empire.—Decline of Mahommed's Health.—His last Words.—His Death. (A. D. 569—632.)

THE great peninsula of Arabia, which extends from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, and from the frontiers of Syria to the shores of the Southern Ocean, forms a distinct world, in which man and beast, the heavens and the earth, wear a peculiar aspect, and are governed by peculiar laws:—every thing recalls the eternal independence of an autochthonous people: the ancient traditions are purely national, and a civilization of a character entirely peculiar, has been attained without any impulse or assistance from foreign nations.

The extent of Arabia is nearly four times that of France; but this vast continent, through which no river takes its course; in which no mountain raises its head high enough to collect the clouds, or to disperse them in rain, or to garner up the snows for the refreshment of these burning plains, is scorched with perpetual drought. The very earth is parched; scantily clothed with a short-lived vegetation during the rainy season, it is reduced to dust as soon as the sun regains his unclouded power. The winds, which sweep across its boundless plains, bear along mountains of sand, which constantly threaten to swallow up the works of man, and often bury the traveller in a living grave. A few springs, which the industry of man, or the instinct of animals has discovered, and whose waters have been carefully collected and sheltered in cisterns or deep wells by that antique charity, that disinterested benevolence, which prompts an individual to labour for an unknown posterity, mark, at long intervals, the spots where the life of man may be preserved. They are as distant as the cities of Europe; and, in the itinerary of the various caravans, more than half the daily stations are without wa-

ter. Besides these cisterns, however, other springs which have escaped the eye of man, or have not been sheltered by his labours, preserve their waters for the wild beasts of the desert; for the lions and tigers whose thirst is more frequently quenched with blood; and for the antelopes which flees at their approach.

The mountains, seared and stripped by the fervour of the sun and the violence of the winds, here and there rear their naked heads; but if any of them are lofty enough to attract the clouds and to draw down refreshing showers, or if any slender rivulet trickles down its barren sides before it loses itself in the boundless sands, a luxuriant fertility marks its whole tract: there, the power of a burning sun vivifies what it elsewhere destroys; an island of verdure arises in the midst of the desert; groves of palms cover the sacred source; all the lower animals assemble there, unawed by man, whose empire appears to them less formidable than that of the desert from which they have fled, and they submit to his control with a readiness unknown in other climes. These mountains, these living springs, these oases, are scattered but rarely over the vast surface of Arabia; but along the coasts of the Red Sea some spots are marked by more abundant waters, and here flourishing cities have arisen from the earliest antiquity; whilst, at the extremity of the peninsula, on the shores of the ocean, the kingdom of Yemen, and the part called by Europeans Arabia the Happy, are watered by copious streams, carefully cultivated, covered with coffee trees, and spice and incense bearing shrubs, whose perfumes are said to be wafted out to sea, and to salute the approaching mariner.

The race of men who inhabit this region, so unlike every other, are gifted by nature with the vigour and endurance necessary to triumph over the obstacles and the evils with which they have to struggle. Muscular, agile, sober, patient, the Arab, like his faithful companion the camel, can endure thirst and hunger: a few dates, or a little ground barley, which he steeps with water in his hand, suffice for his nourishment. Fresh and pure water is for him so rare, it seems to him so great a bounty of Heaven, that he thinks not of ardent liquors. His faculties are employed in becoming thoroughly acquainted with the region he has to subjugate; and the pathless desert, the moving columns of sand, the parching and poisonous breath of the Samum, strike him neither with amazement nor with dread. He boldly traverses the desert in search of whatever riches are to be found in it; he subdues all

the animals that dwell in it; or rather, he shares with them, as friends whatever can be wrested from a niggard nature. He guides their intelligence to collect and to preserve the scanty food which Arabia produces; and while he profits by their labours, he preserves the nobleness of their character. The horse lives in the midst of his children; his intelligence is constantly called forth by the society of man, and he obeys rather from affection than from fear. The camel lends him his strength, and his patience, and enables him to carry on an active commerce in a country which nature seemed to have cut off from all communication with the rest of the world.

It is only by the triumph of industry and of courage that man can exist in Arabia, in a constant struggle with nature; he could not exist if he had likewise to struggle against despotism. The Arab has always been free, he will always be free; for, with him, the loss of liberty would be almost immediately followed by the loss of existence. How could the maintenance of kings or of armies be extracted out of the labour which scarcely suffices to supply himself with the means of subsistence? The inhabitant of Arabia Felix alone has not received from nature this stern security for freedom. In Yemen there are absolute kings. Indeed, this country has more than once been exposed to foreign conquest; but the cities on the banks of the Red Sea are republics, and the Arab of the desert knows no other government than the patriarchal one. The scheik, the patriarch of the tribe, is regarded as father; all the members of it call themselves his children; a figure of speech adopted by other governments, but in Arabia alone, little removed from reality. The scheik counsels his children, he does not command them; the resolutions of the tribe are formed in the assembly of elders; and he who dissents from them, turns his horse's head to the desert, and goes on his solitary way. It is but here and there that a spot of Arabia is susceptible of cultivation. There alone can territorial property exist. Elsewhere the earth, like the air, belongs alike to all, and the fruits which she bears without culture are common to all. The frequent conflicts of the Bedouin, who acknowledges no territorial property, with those who portioned out fields, enclosed them and claimed them as their own, have accustomed the former to pay little respect to the laws of property in general. Indeed, he acknowledges none but those which govern his tribe; the property of his brother, or that for which his brother has pledged his word, is alone

sacred in his eyes: all other he regards as lawful prey; and he exercises the profession of a robber without injury to his self-respect, or to his own sense of morality or of law. He assails and partitions whatever foreign property comes within his reach. With him the words stranger and enemy are synonymous, unless the stranger have acquired the claims of a guest, have eaten salt at his table, or have come to seat himself with generous confidence at his hearth. Then the person of the stranger becomes sacred in his eyes; he will share his last morsel of bread, his last cup of water with him, and will defend him to the last moment of his own life.

Among other nations nobility is only the transmission of ancient wealth and power; but the Bedouin has none but moveable wealth, which he seldom long preserves; he scorns to obey, and does not seek to command; if, then, he respects antiquity of blood, if he carefully preserves his own genealogy, and that of his noble horses, it is only from reverence for the past, from the power of memory, and that force of imagination which is nourished by long solitude and leisure. The Arab is, of all mankind, the one whose mind is kept in the most constant activity. The history of his tribe is the rule of his conduct. Thrown by his wanderings into contact with men of all nations, he never forgets the evil or the good which his fathers have received at the hands of the fathers of those he encounters. In the total absence of all social power, of all guarantee for personal security afforded by magistrates or by laws, gratitude and revenge become fundamental rules of his conduct. Education and habit have conspired to place them beyond the domain of reason, under the guardianship of honour and of a kind of religion. His gratitude is boundless in its devotion, his vengeance unchecked by pity; it is as patient and artful as it is cruel, because it is kept alive by a sense of duty rather than by passion; the study of past times, even the record of the genealogies of his race, serves as fuel to these two sentiments.

But the memory of the Arab is enriched by other recollections. The most intense of all the national pleasures is that of poetry; a poetry very different from ours, breathing more impetuous desires, more burning passions, and uttered in a language more figurative, adorned with an imagination more unbridled. We are bad judges of its beauties or of its defects; we ought, however, to admit that it is not the poetry of an uncivilized nation, but of a nation which, following a road to civilization different from that we have trod,

has advanced as far as climate and other insurmountable obstacles would permit. The Arabic language has been constructed and polished with care, and the wanderer of the desert is sensible to the slightest want of delicacy, of purity, of expression. Eloquence had been cultivated as well as poetry; and before that of the expositors of the law had acquired its full maturity under the reigns of the caliphs, political eloquence had attained to a high perfection, both in the councils of the republics of the Red Sea, and under the tents of the desert, where the chieftains needed its aid to persuade those whom they knew it to be impossible to command.

Religion had still deeper influence over the imaginations of the Arabs than poetry; this grave and ardent people, incessantly struggling with difficulties, having death always before their eyes, often exposed to those long and austere privations which exalt the soul of the cenobite, had, from all times, turned their meditations towards the remote and mysterious destinies of man, and his connexion with the invisible world. The eldest religion of the earth, Judaism, had its birth almost within the limits of Arabia. Palestine is on its frontiers; the Hebrews long inhabited the desert; one of the sacred books (that of Job) was written by an Arab, in his native tongue; and the origin of the Arabic nation, the descent from Ismael, the son of Abraham; flattered the national pride. Numerous and powerful colonies of Jews were scattered over Arabia, where they freely exercised their religion. Still more numerous colonies of Christians had been successively introduced, by the furious persecutions set on foot in the empire against all the sects which had successively fallen off from orthodoxy in the long dissensions on the Arian controversy, and that of the two natures. Arabia was so completely free, that absolute toleration necessarily existed; and all these refugee sects, and all the proselytes they could make among the Arabs, were on a footing of perfect equality. Finding it impossible to injure each other, they were forced to live in peace; and those who on the other side the frontier were incessantly occupied in denouncing each other to the tribunals, in reciprocally stripping each other of the rights of citizens and of men, seemed in Arabia to be restored to some feeling of charity.

But though Arabia had received within her bosom Jews, Christians of all sects, Magi, and Sabeans, she had, also, a national religion, a polytheism peculiar to herself. Its principal temple was the Kaaba at Mecca, where a black stone which had fallen

from heaven was the object of veneration to the faithful, and the temple in which it was deposited was likewise adorned with three hundred and sixty idols. The guardianship of the Kaaba was intrusted to the family of the Koreishites, the most ancient and most illustrious race of the republic of Mecca; and this sacerdotal dignity conferred on the head of the family the presidency over the councils of the republic. Pilgrims from all parts of Arabia devoutly repaired to Mecca to adore the sacred stone, and to deposite their offerings in the Kaaba; and the inhabitants of Mecca, whose city, deprived of water, and surrounded by a steril region, had owed its prosperity to superstition rather than to commerce, were attached to the national faith with a zeal heightened by personal interest.

In the year 569 of our era, was born, of one of the most distinguished families of Arabia, a man who combined all the qualities which characterize his nation. Mahommed, the son of Abdallah, was of the race of the Koreishites, and of the particular branch of Hussein, to which the guardianship of the Kaaba and the presidency of the republic of Mecca were attached. Abdal-Motalleb, the grandfather of Mahommed, had held these high dignities; but he, as well as his son Abdallah, died before Mohammed arrived at man's estate. The presidency of Mecca passed to Abu Taleb, the eldest of his sons; and Mahommed's portion of the paternal inheritance was reduced to five camels and a single slave. At the age of twenty-five he engaged in the service of a rich and noble widow, named Khadijah, for whose commercial interests he made two journeys into Syria. His zeal and intelligence were soon rewarded with the hand of Khadijah. His wife was no longer young; and Mahommed, who was reputed the handsomest of the Koreishite race, and who had a passion for women which Arab morality does not condemn, and which polygamy, established by law, has sanctioned, proved the sincerity and tenderness of his gratitude, by his fidelity, during a union of twenty-four years. As long as she lived, he gave her no rival.

Restored by his marriage to opulence and repose, Mahommed, whose character was austere, whose imagination was ardent, and whom his extreme sobriety, exceeding that of most anchorets, disposed to religious meditations and lofty reveries, had now no other thought, no other occupation, than to fix his own belief, to disengage it from the grosser superstitions of his country, and to

elevate his mind to the knowledge of God. Grandson and nephew of the high priest of an idol, powerful and revered for his connexion with the temple of the black stone, Mahommed beheld the divinity neither in this rude emblem nor in the idols made by the hand of man which surrounded it. He sought it in his soul; he recognised its existence as an eternal spirit, omnipresent, beneficent, and incapable of being represented by any corporeal image. After brooding over this sublime idea for fifteen years in solitude, after ripening it by meditation, after, perhaps, exalting his imagination by reveries, at the age of forty he resolved to become the reformer of his nation; he believed himself—so, at least, he affirmed—called to this work by a special mission of the divinity.

It would be an act of extreme injustice to persist in regarding as a mere impostor, and not as a reformer, the man who urged a whole nation onwards in the most important of all steps in the knowledge of truth; who led it from an absurd and degrading idolatry, from a priestly slavery which compromised morality and opened a market for the redemption of every vice by expiations, to the knowledge of an omnipotent, omnipresent, and supremely good Being;—of the true God, in short; for, since his attributes are the same, and he is acknowledged the sole object of worship, the God of the Musulmans is the God of the Christians. The profession of faith which Mahommed taught to his disciples, and which has been preserved unaltered to this day, is, that there is but one God, and that Mahommed is his prophet. Was he an impostor because he called himself a prophet?

Even on this head, a melancholy experience of human weakness—of that mixture of enthusiasm and artifice which, in all ages, has characterized leaders of sects, and which we might, perhaps, find in our own times, and at no great distance from us, in men whose persuasion is undoubtedly sincere, and whose zeal ardent, yet who assert or insinuate a claim to supernatural gifts which they do not possess—ought to teach us indulgence. An intense persuasion is easily confounded with an internal revelation; the dreams of an excited imagination become sensible appearances; faith in a future event seems to us like a prophecy; we hesitate to remove an error which has arisen spontaneously within the mind of a true believer, when we think it favourable to his salvation; after sparing his illusions, the next thing is to

encourage them, and thus we arrive at pious frauds, which we fancy justified by their end, and by their effect. We easily persuade ourselves of what we have persuaded others; and we believe in ourselves when those we love believe in us. Mahommed never pretended to the gift of miracles; we need not go far to find preachers of our own days, who have founded no empires and yet are not so modest.

But the most perfect probity affords no security against the dangers of fanaticism, the intolerance which it engenders, nor the cruelty to which it leads. Mahommed was the reformer of the Arabs; he taught them, and he wished to teach them, the knowledge of the true God. Nevertheless, from the time he adopted the new character of prophet, his life lost its purity, his temper its mildness; policy entered into his religion, fraud mingled more and more with his conduct; and, at the close of his career, we can hardly explain to ourselves how he could be in good faith with himself.

Mahommed could not read; letters were not essential in Arabia to a good education: but his memory was adorned with all the most brilliant poetry of his native tongue, his style was pure and elegant, and his eloquence forcible and seductive. The Koran, which he dictated, is esteemed the masterpiece of Arabian literature; and the sublimity of the language affords to Musulmans sufficient evidence of the inspired character of its author, though, to readers of another faith, the traces of inspiration are not manifest. An admiration acquired in the earliest infancy for a work constantly present to the memory, constantly recalled by all the allusions of national literature, soon creates the very beauty it seems to find. The rarity of literary education seems to have inspired Mahommed with a sort of religious reverence for every book which pretended to inspiration. The authority of *The Book*, the authority of every thing written, is always great among semi-barbarous people; it is peculiarly so among the Musulmans. The books of the Jews, of the Christians, even of the Magi, raise those who make them the rule of their faith, above the rank of infidels in the eyes of the followers of Mahommed; and he himself, while he claimed the character of the greatest prophet of God, the Paraclete promised in Holy Writ, admitted six successive divine revelations—those of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Christ, and, as the final accomplishment of all, his own.

The religion of Mahommed does not consist in belief in dogmas alone, but in the practice of morality—in justice and charity. He has, it is true, shared the fate of other legislators who have tried to subject the virtues of the heart to positive rules;—the form has taken the place of the substance. Of all acts of religious legislation, the Koran is the one which has erected almsgiving into the most rigorous duty, and has given to it the most precise limits: it exacts from a tenth to a fifth of the income of every true believer, for works of charity. But the rule has been substituted for the sentiment; the charity of the Musulman is an affair of personal calculation, directed entirely to his own salvation; and the man who has scrupulously performed the duty of almsgiving, is not the less hard and cruel to his fellow-men.

Outward observances were especially necessary in a religion, which, admitting no religious ceremonies, and even no order of priesthood except the guardians of the laws, seemed peculiarly exposed to danger from coldness and indifference. Preaching was the social observance; prayer, ablution, fast, the individual observances, enjoined on Musulmans. To the very end of his life, Mahommed constantly preached to his people, either on Friday, the day he had specially set apart for religious worship, or on solemn occasions,—in all moments of danger, in all moments of inspiration. His inspiring and seductive eloquence contributed to increase the number of his followers, and to animate their zeal. After him, the early caliphs, and all who enjoyed any authority among the faithful, continued these preachings or exhortations, often at the head of armies, whose martial ardour they heightened by the aid of religious enthusiasm. Five times a day, the Musulman is bound to utter a short and fervent prayer, expressed in words of his own, unfettered by any form or liturgy. As a means of fixing his attention, he is commanded to turn his face towards Mecca while he prays—towards that very temple of the Kaaba which was consecrated to idols, but which Mahommed, after having purified and hallowed it to the true God, regarded with the veneration it had so long commanded from his nation and his family. Personal cleanliness was prescribed as a duty to the true believer who was about to present himself as a supplicant before God; and ablution of the face and hands was the necessary preparation for every prayer. Yet, as Islamism was first proclaimed to a nation which dwelt in deserts where water was not to be found, the Koran permits the

faithful, in case of extreme need, to substitute ablutions with sand. The fasts were very rigid, and admitted of no exception; they bore the character of the sober and austere man who imposed them on his disciples. At all times, and in all places, he forbade them the use of wine, and of every sort of fermented liquor; and, during one month of the year, the Ramadan, which, according to the lunar calendar, falls in every month in succession, the Musulmans, from sunrise to sunset, may neither eat nor drink, neither enjoy the luxury of the bath nor of perfumes, nor, in short, any gratification of the senses. Nevertheless, Mahommed, who imposed so rigid a penance on his disciples, was no advocate for an ascetic life; he did not permit his companions to bind themselves by vows, nor would he suffer any monks in his religion: it was not till three years after his death, that fakirs and derricks arose, and this is one of the most important changes Islamism has undergone.

But the kind of abstinence on which Christian doctors have insisted the most, was that to which Mahommed was indifferent, or which he regarded with the greatest indulgence. Before his time the Arabs had enjoyed unbounded license in love and marriage. Mahommed forbade incestuous unions; he punished adultery and dissoluteness, and diminished the facility of divorce; but he permitted every Musulman to have four wives or concubines, whose rights and privileges he defined by law. Raising himself alone, above the laws he had imposed on others, after the death of his first wife Khadijah, he married fifteen, or, according to other writers, seventeen wives in succession, all widows, with the exception of Ayesha, daughter of Abubekr. A fresh chapter of the Koran was brought him by an angel to dispense him from submission to a law which, to us, seems so little severe.

His indulgence for this burning passion of the Arabian temperament, which he shared with his countrymen, farther displayed itself in the nature of the future rewards he proclaimed as the sanctions of his religion. He described the forms of the judgment to come; in which the body, uniting itself anew to the soul, the sins and the good works of all who believed in God would be weighed, and rewarded or punished. With a tolerance rare in the leader of a sect, he declared, or at least he did not deny, that the followers of every religion might be saved, provided their actions were virtuous. But to the Musulman he promised, that whatever might have been his conduct, he would finally be re-

ceived into paradise, after expiating his sins or his crimes in a state of purgatory, which would not exceed seven thousand years. The picture which he drew of purgatory and of hell differed little from those which other religions have presented to the terror of mankind. But his paradise was painted by an Arab imagination: groves, rivulets, flowers; perfumes under the shade of fresh and verdant groves; seventy black-eyed houris, gifted with immortal youth and dazzling beauty, solely occupied in administering to the enjoyments of each true believer;—such were the rewards promised to the faithful. Although some of Mahommed's most zealous disciples had been women, he abstained from declaring what sort of paradise was in store for them.

Among the articles of faith which Mahommed strove to inculcate on the minds of his followers, was one which acquired greater importance when he united the character of conqueror to that of prophet. In his endeavours to reconcile the inscrutable union of divine prescience with human liberty, he had leaned towards fatalism; but he never denied the influence of human will on human actions: he only taught his soldiers that the hour of death was determined aforehand, and that he who sought to escape it on the field of battle, would meet it in his bed. But disjoining this idea from all others, by insisting little on any other kind of constraint imposed by divine prescience on the freewill of man, and inculcating this single position with undivided force (though fatalism, to be rational, ought to extend to every action of our lives,) he inspired the Musulmans with an indifference to danger, he gave a security to their bravery, which we should seek in vain among soldiers, animated only by the nobler sentiments of honour and patriotism.

It was in the year 609, when Mahommed was already forty, that he began to preach his new doctrine at Mecca. He sought his first proselytes in his own family, and the influence he obtained over their minds affords sufficient evidence of the excellence of his domestic character. Khadijah was his first convert; then Seid, his slave; Ali, the son of Abu Taleb, his cousin; and Abubekr, one of the most considerable citizens of Mecca. Ten years were employed by Mahommed in slowly disseminating the new doctrine among his countrymen. All who adopted it became inflamed with the ardent faith of new converts. The prophet—that was the only name by which Mahommed was known among his disciples—seemed to them to speak the immediate

word of the Divinity; he left not a doubt on their minds either as to the truths he revealed, or as to the fulfilment of his promises.

In the fourth year of his declared mission he appointed his cousin Ali, then not more than fourteen years old, his vizir; the empire he had to govern did not then extend over more than twenty followers.

Mahommed did not address himself to the citizens of Mecca alone. He waited at the Kaaba for the pilgrims who resorted thither from all parts of Arabia; he represented to them the incoherence and the grossness of the religious rites they came to practise; he appealed to their reason, and implored them to acknowledge the one God, invisible, all good, all powerful,—the ruler of the universe,—instead of the black stone or the lifeless idols before which they prostrated themselves. The eloquence of Mahommed gained him proselytes; but the citizens of Mecca were indignant at this attack on the sanctity of their peculiar temple; this blow at the prosperity of their city, no less than at the authority of their religion, by the grandson of their high priest, the nephew of their chief magistrate. They called upon Abu Taleb to put an end to this scandal. Mahommed's uncle, at the same time that he opposed every possible resistance to the spread of his nephew's doctrine, would not suffer his life or his liberty to be attacked. Mahommed, supported by the family of Hashem against the remaining Koreishites, refused to submit to a decree of excommunication pronounced against him and fixed up in the temple. Aided by his disciples, he sustained a siege in his own house, repulsed the assailants, and kept his ground at Mecca till the death of Abu Taleb and of Khadijah. But when Abu Sophyan, of the branch of the Ommaiades, succeeded to the dignities of head of the republic and of religion, Mahommed clearly saw that flight was his only resource; for already his enemies had agreed that he should be struck at the same instant by the sword of one member of every tribe, so that none might be peculiarly obnoxious to the vengeance of the Hashemites.

A refuge, however, was already prepared for Mahommed. His religion had made some progress in the rest of Arabia; and the city of Medina, sixty miles to the north of Mecca, on the Arabian Gulf, had declared itself ready to receive him, and to acknowledge him as prophet and sovereign. But the flight was difficult—that celebrated flight called the Hegira, and which forms the grand era

of the Musulman religion. The Koreishites watched Mahommed with the utmost vigilance; they were, however, deceived by the brave and the faithful Ali. In the full conviction that he was devoting himself to the poniards of the implacable foes of his leader and friend, he placed himself in Mahommed's bed. Mahommed and Abubekr fled alone. In the deserts of Arabia, where there are few objects to break the monotonous line of the horizon, it is not easy to escape the eye of enemies well mounted and eager in pursuit. The two fugitives were on the point of falling into the hands of the Koreishites, when they found an asylum in the cavern of Thor, where they passed three days. Their pursuers advanced to the mouth of the cave; but seeing the web of a spider hanging unbroken across it, they concluded that no human being could have entered, and passed on. It was not till the heat of the pursuit had subsided, that Mahommed and Abubekr, mounted on two dromedaries which their partisans had procured, and accompanied by a chosen band of fugitives from Mecca, made their entry into Medina, on the 10th of October, A. D. 622, sixteen days after they had quitted the former city.

From this time Mahommed, who was now fifty-three years of age, was regarded not only as a prophet, but as a military sovereign. His religion assumed a different spirit; he no longer contented himself with the arts of persuasion, he assumed a tone of command. He declared that the season of long-suffering and patience was over; and that his mission, and that of every true believer, was to extend the empire of his religion by the sword, to destroy the temples of infidels, to obliterate all the monuments of idolatry, and to pursue unbelievers to the ends of the earth, without resting from so holy a work even on the days specially consecrated to religion.

"The sword," said he, "is the key of heaven and of hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night passed under arms on his behalf, will be of more avail hereafter to the faithful, than two months of fasting and prayer. To whomsoever falls in battle, his sins shall be pardoned; at the day of judgment his wounds will shine with the splendour of vermilion; they will emit the fragrance of musk and of ambergris; and the wings of angels and of the cherubim shall be the substitutes for the limbs he may have lost."

Nor were the glories of heaven the only rewards offered to the valour of the Musulmans: the riches of earth were also to be di-

vided among them; and Mahommed from that time began to lead them on to the attack of the rich caravans which crossed the desert. His religion thus attracted the wandering Bedouin, less from the sublime dogmas of the unity and spirituality of God, which it promulgated, than from the sanction it gave to pillage, and the rights it conferred on conquerors, not only over the wealth, but over the women and slaves of the conquered.

Yet at the very time that Mahommed shared the treasures won by the combined force of the believers, in his own person he did not depart from the antique simplicity of his life. His house and his mosque at Medina were wholly devoid of ornament; his garments were coarse; his food consisted of a few dates and a little barley bread; and he preached to the people every Friday, leaning on the trunk of a palm tree. It was not till after the lapse of many years, that he allowed himself the luxury of a wooden chair.

Mahommed's first battle was fought in 623, against the Koreishites in the valley of Bedr. He had tried to get possession of a rich caravan, headed by Abu Sophyan; the inhabitants of Meca had assembled in a number greatly superior to that he commanded, with a view to deliver it: 350 Musulmans were opposed to 850 Koreishite infantry, seconded by 100 horse.

Such were the feeble means with which a war was carried on, which was soon to decide the fate of a large portion of the globe. The fanatical ardour of the Musulmans triumphed over the numerical superiority of their enemies. They believed that the succour of three thousand angels, led by the archangel Gabriel, had decided the fate of the battle. But Mahommed had not made the faith of his people dependent on success; the same year he was beaten at Ohud, six miles from Medina, and himself wounded. In a public discourse he announced his defeat, and the death of seventy martyrs, who, he declared, had already entered into the joys of paradise.

Mahommed was indebted to the Jews for a part of his knowledge and of his religion, yet he entertained that hatred of them which seems to become more bitter between religious sects, in proportion as their differences are few, and their points of agreement many. Powerful colonies of that nation, rich, commercial, and utterly devoid of all the warlike virtues, had established themselves in Arabia, at a little distance from Medina: Mahommed attacked them in succession, from the year 623 to 627. He was not satisfied with partitioning their property, he gave up al-

most all the conquered to tortures which, in his other wars, rarely sullied the lustre of his arms.

But the object of Mahommed's most ardent desires was the conquest of Mecca. This city was, in his eyes, both the future seat of his religion, and his true country. There it was that he wished to restore the glory of his ancestors, and to surpass it by that which he had won for himself. His first attempts had little success, but every year added to the number of his proselytes: Omar, Khaled, Amru, who had distinguished themselves in the ranks of his enemies, successively went over to his banner; 10,000 Arabs of the desert swelled his ranks; and, in 629, Abu Sophyan was compelled to surrender to him the keys of the city. Eleven men and six women, who had been conspicuous among his ancient foes, were proscribed by Mahommed. This was little for the vengeance of an Arab. The Koreishites threw themselves at his feet. "What mercy can you expect," said he, "from a man whom you have so deeply offended?"—"We trust," replied they, "to the generosity of our kinsman."—"And you shall not trust in vain," said he; "you are free." The Kaaba was purified by his orders; all the inhabitants of Mecca embraced the religion of the Koran; and a perpetual law prohibited any unbeliever from setting foot within the holy city.

Every step gained by the victor prophet rendered the succeeding one less difficult; and, after the conquest of Mecca, that of the rest of Arabia cost him only three years, (from 629 to 632.) It was marked by the great victory of Hunain, and by the siege and the reduction of Tayef. His lieutenants advanced from the shores of the Red Sea to those of the ocean and of the Persian Gulf; and, at the period of Mahommed's last pilgrimage to the Kaaba, in 632, a hundred and fourteen thousand Musulmans marched under his banner.

During the six years of his reign, Mahommed fought in person at nine sieges or battles, and his lieutenants led on the army of the faithful in fifteen military expeditions. Almost all these were confined within the limits of Arabia; but, in 629 or 630, Seid marched at the head of a Musulman army into Palestine; and Heraclius, at the moment of his return from his brilliant campaigns, was attacked by an unknown enemy. The following year Mahommed advanced in person, at the head of 20,000 foot and 10,000 horse, on the road to Damascus, and formally declared war upon the Roman empire. It does not appear, how-

ever, that any battle was fought; and, perhaps, his declining health induced him to disband his army.

Mahommed had now reached his sixty-third year: for four years the vigour of body which he had formerly displayed had seemed to desert him, yet he continued to discharge all the functions of a king, a general, and a prophet. A fever, which lasted a fortnight, accompanied with occasional delirium, was the immediate cause of his death. As he felt his danger, he recommended himself to the prayers of the faithful, and to the forgiveness of all whom he might have offended. "If," said he, in his last public discourse, "there be any one here whom I have struck unjustly, I submit myself to be struck by him in return; if I have injured the reputation of any Musulman, let him in his turn disclose all my sins; if I have despoiled any one, behold I am ready to satisfy his claims."—"Yes," replied a voice from the crowd, "thou owest me three drachms of silver, which have never been repaid me." Mohammed examined the debt, discharged it, and thanked his creditor for demanding it in this world, rather than at the tribunal of God. He then enfranchised his slaves, gave minute directions for his burial, calmed the lamentations of his friends, and pronounced a benediction upon them. Till within three days of his death he continued to perform his devotions in the mosque. When, at length, he was too feeble, he charged Abubekr with this duty; and it was thought that he thus intended to point out his old friend as his successor. But he expressed no opinion, no desire, on this subject, and seemed to leave it entirely to the decision of the assembly of the faithful. He contemplated the approach of death with perfect calmness; but, mingling to the last the doubtful pretensions of a prophet with the lively faith of an enthusiast, he repeated the words which he declared he heard from the archangel Gabriel, who visited the earth for the last time on his behalf. He repeated what he had before affirmed—that the angel of death would not bear away his soul without first solemnly asking his permission; and this permission he granted aloud. Extended on a carpet which covered the floor, his head during his last agony rested on the bosom of Ayesha, the best beloved of his wives. He fainted from excess of pain; but, on recovering his senses, he fixed his eyes on the ceiling, and distinctly pronounced these, his last words:—"Oh God, pardon my sins! I come to rejoin

my brethren in heaven." He expired on the 25th of May, or, according to another calculation, the 3d of June, 632.

Despair filled the breasts of his disciples throughout the city of Medina, where he breathed his last. The fiery Omar, drawing his sword, declared that he would strike off the head of the infidel who should dare to assert that the prophet was no more. But Abubekr, the faithful friend and the earliest disciple of Mahommed, addressing himself to Omar, and to the multitude, said, "Is it Mahommed, or the God of Mahommed, that we worship? The God of Mahommed lives for ever: but his prophet was a mortal like ourselves; and, as he had predicted to us, he has undergone the common lot of humanity."

By these words the tumult was appeased; and Mahommed was buried by his kindred, and by his cousin, and son-in-law, Ali, in the very spot where he expired.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ignorance or Indifference of neighbouring Nations to the Rise and Progress of Islamism.—Its rapid Spread under Mahommed's immediate Successors.—Union of the Military and the Monastic Character in the Saracenic Warriors.—Singular Frugality of the Government.—Abubekr elected under the title of Khaliph, or Lieutenant of the Prophet.—His extreme Frugality and Simplicity.—His Death.—He appoints Omar his Successor.—Character of Omar.—Conquests of the Musulmans during the Reigns of Abubekr and Omar.—Defeat of the King of Persia and of the Greek Emperor.—Conquest of Syria, Persia, and Egypt.—Instructions of Abubekr to the Generals.—State of the Asiatic Provinces of the Greek Empire, and of Persia.—Threefold Alternative offered by the Mahomedan Conquerors before giving Battle.—Summons of Abu Obeidah to the City of Jerusalem.—Successes of Khaled in Persia.—His Recall to Syria.—Siege of Bosra.—Treachery of Romanus.—Desertions to the Musulman Army.—Siege of Damascus.—Fate of the Roman Empire decided at the Battle of Azzadin.—Continued Successes of the Arabs.—Siege of Jerusalem.—Its Surrender.—Entry of the Khaliph.—Submission of Antioch and Aleppo.—Flight of Heraclius and of his Son Constantine.—Dispersion of the Greek Army.—Submission of the rest of Syria.—Death of Abu Obeidah.—Death of Khaled.—Conquest of Persia by the Musulmans.—Battle of Cadesia.—Death of Yezdegerd and Extinction of the Line of the Sassanides.—Conquest of Egypt by Amu.—Siege of Memphis.—Surrender of it by the Copts.—Foundation of Kahira, or Cairo.—Siege of Alexandria.—Its Evacuation by the Greeks.—Its Magnificence.—Virtuous Forbearance of Omar.—Alexandrian Library.—Death of Heraclius.—Changes in the Spirit of the Musulman Army.—Assassination of Omar.—Election of Othman, Secretary of the Prophet.—External Successes and Internal Dissensions of his Reign.—His Assassination.—Ali proclaimed Khaliph.—Opposition to him.—Ayesha.—Battle of the Camel.—Election of Moavia in Syria.—Civil War between Ali and Moavia.—Origin of the Sects of Shiah and Sunnis.—Murder of Ali.—His Son Hassan acknowledged by the Shiah.—Hassan's Abdication in Favour of Moavia.—Khaliphate made hereditary in Moavia's Family.—Revolt and Death of Hossein.—Destruction of the Family of the Prophet. A. D. 632—680.

FOR twenty-three years Mahommed had sustained the character of prophet; for ten, that of sovereign and conqueror; and, in the latter years of his life, he had given to his empire an extent far beyond what the hopes of any but a fanatic could possibly have aspired to at the commencement of his career. But his victories, his doctrine, and the revolution he had effected, had been confined within the boundaries of Arabia. Changes of opinion in an illiterate nation, whose language had never been studied by its neighbours, did not seem of sufficient importance to engage the attention of the world. The revolutions of the little republics of the Red

Sea had never had the slightest influence over the condition of other countries; and the union of the Arabs of the desert, free as the antelope which bounds over their sands, seemed never likely to be more than transitory. At Constantinople, at Antioch, and at Alexandria, the birth of Islamism was either wholly unknown, or was thought too insignificant to be feared.

But the revolution, which, during the life of Mahommed, had been confined to Arabia, made wide and rapid progress during the lives of his earliest disciples and the reigns of his chosen friends. From the death of the prophet, in 632, to that of Ali, his cousin and son-in-law, and one of his first adherents, in 661, twelve years were filled with conquests which astound the imagination. During eleven years of weakness and irresolution, the monarchy then seemed to retrograde. Lastly, five years of furious civil war terminated in the establishment of a despotism as foreign to the first institutions of Mahommed, as to the manners and the sentiments of the Arabs.

Mahommed had founded his military system entirely on the lively faith of his warriors; on the confidence with which he had inspired them, that the battle-field opened the shortest way to eternal happiness, and on the ardour of the Musulmans for obtaining that new crown of martyrdom, reserved for those who fell by the sword of the infidel. But he had made no change in their armour, nor in their manner of fighting. The troops presented the same appearance which their neighbours had held in constant contempt. The Saracen soldiers were half naked: armed, when on foot, only with a bow and arrows; when on horseback, (and these were the more numerous,) with a light lance and a sabre, or scimitar. Their horses were indefatigable, unequalled in the world for their docility, as well as for their spirit. But they did not manœuvre in large or regular masses; they knew nothing of those charges of northern cavalry which bear down battalions by their resistless weight. Single-handed warriors advanced in front of the army to signalize themselves by acts of personal prowess, and, after a few lightning strokes of their flashing scimitars, escaped from their enemies by the swiftness of their steeds, whenever they found themselves inferior in numbers or in armour. Battles were long-continued skirmishes, in which the hostile troops did not engage corps to corps: they frequently lasted several days; and it was not till after their adversaries, exhausted by unusual fatigue, were put to rout, that

the Arabs became terrible in pursuit. Mahommed's brothers in arms do not seem to have made any advance in military science; and, during the most brilliant period of Saracenic conquest, during the lives of the associates of the prophet, no sort of warlike engine followed the army, and sieges were conducted by them as they are by savages. Soldiers like these, known only as robbers of the desert, had never inspired any serious fears either in the Romans or the Persians, even in the times of the greatest distresses of either empire. Yet these desert-robbers attacked both empires at once, and overthrew both in a few years: their weapons were precisely the same; their souls alone were changed.

The spectacle had never before been exhibited (let us hope that it may never again be witnessed) of a great and entire nation, forgetting the present world, and occupied solely with the world to come, while, at the same time, it displayed all the worldly qualities; the most consummate policy, the most intrepid bravery, the most indefatigable activity. Never till now had the virtues of the monk been seen united with those of the soldier: sobriety, patience, submission, the strict performance of all duties, however humble, or however sublime, joined to lust of carnage, love of glory, and that enterprising energy of mind, so different from the passive courage of the convent. At a later period, in the wars of the crusades, the Christian knights exhibited the same qualities, but on a much more limited scale. If the warlike fanaticism of the knights of Malta had been communicated to a whole people, they also would have conquered the world.

Never had the revenues of a great empire been administered with the parsimony of a convent, by a government which cost nothing, which wanted nothing for itself, which scorned all luxury and all pleasure, and which devoted all the gains of war exclusively to the support of war. This government must be the first object of our attention.

Mahommed had not connected any political opinions with his religion; he had not destroyed the freedom of the desert; he had instituted neither aristocratical senate, nor hereditary power, in his own, or in any other family. The liberty of all, the individual will of each, had been suspended by the power of inspiration. In him the people had thought they obeyed the voice of God, and not any human authority. When he died, no organi-

zation had been given to the empire of the faithful, no hand seemed prepared to gather the inheritance of the prophet. But the same religious enthusiasm still inspired the Musulmans. Their sword, their wealth, and their power, ought, in their eyes, to have no other destination than the extending of the knowledge of the true God: the part which each took was indifferent, provided he laboured with all his strength to the same end; and the presidency of the republic seemed to consist in nothing save the presidency of the prayers at the tomb or at the palace of Medina. It was thought that the early friends of the prophet were the most likely to be inspired by his example, and instructed by his familiar conversation; and, consequently, Abubekr, the first believer in Mahommed's mission, and the companion of his flight, was pointed out by Omar, and proclaimed by the chiefs assembled around the death-bed of the prophet, under the title of his lieutenant or khaliph.

This title was acknowledged by the cities of Mecca, Medina, and Tayef, and, more especially, by the army of the Faithful; but the Arabs of the desert, who had been allured far more by the hope of plunder than the revelations of the prophet, already began to desert a cause which they thought a tottering one. The idolaters, who had been thought converted, were in arms for the restoration of the ancient national faith; and a new prophet, named Moseilama, inspired either by genuine fanaticism, or by the example of Mahommed's success, preached a new religion in Yemen. Abubekr, already feeling the weight of years, thought himself dispensed from performing any other duties of a khaliph than those of public prayer and exhortation, and deputed the valiant Khaled, surnamed 'the Sword of God,' to subdue the rebels who abandoned the faith and attacked the empire of Islamism: his victories restored peace and religious unity to Arabia in a few months.

Abubekr, mean while, had ordered his daughter Ayesha, the widow of Mahommed, to make an inventory of his patrimony, that every Musulman might know whether he had sought to enrich himself by the contributions of the faithful. He demanded a salary or allowance of three pieces of gold a week for the maintenance of himself, a single black slave, and one camel; at the end of every week he distributed to the poor all that was left out of this humble pension. Abubekr continued for two years at the head of the republic: his time was exclusively spent in prayer,

penitence, and the administration of justice, which was marked by equity, and tempered by mildness. At the close of this period, the aged friend of the prophet felt his end approaching; and, with the consent of the faithful, named the intrepid Omar as his successor. "I do not want that place," said Omar. "But the place wants you," replied Abubekr. Omar, having been saluted by the acclamations of the army, was invested with the khaliphate on the 24th of July, A. D. 634.

Omar had given brilliant proofs of valour in the wars of Mahommed; but he considered the dignity of khaliph as putting an end to his military career, and exacting from him an exclusive attention to religious duties. During a reign of ten years he was solely intent on directing the prayers of the faithful, giving an example of moderation and justice, of abstinence, and contempt of outward grandeur. His food was barley bread or dates; his drink, water; the dress in which he preached to the people was patched in twelve places. A satrap of Persia, who came to do him homage, found him sleeping on the steps of the mosque at Medina; and yet he had at his disposal funds which had enabled him to grant pensions to all the brothers in arms of the prophet. All those who had fought at the battle of Bedr, had five thousand pieces of gold a year; all who had served under Mahommed had, at least, three thousand; and all the soldiers who had distinguished themselves under Abubekr enjoyed some reward.

It was during the reigns of Abubekr and Omar that the Musulmans achieved the most wonderful conquests. During these twelve years they attacked, at the same time, the two rivals, Yezdegerd, grandson of Chosroes, king of Persia, and Heraclius, the Roman emperor. They subjugated Syria, Persia, and Egypt; they reduced to obedience thirty-six thousand cities, towns, or castles; they destroyed four thousand temples or churches, and they built fourteen hundred mosques dedicated to the religion of Mahommed. These conquests were achieved by lieutenants appointed by the khaliph. Among them, Khaled, the Sword of God; Amru, the conqueror of Egypt; Abu Obeidah, the protector as well as the conqueror of Syria, peculiarly distinguished themselves: but all jealousy and personal ambition were so entirely forgotten by men whose sole object was the triumph and ascendancy of Islamism, that they descended in turn from the highest commands to the most subaltern posts; and a private soldier or an enfranchised slave was set over the heads of veteran

warriors, without exciting a murmur, or the least inclination to resistance.

The comrades of Mahommed, being utterly ignorant of geography; of the interests, the strength, the policy, and the language of the neighbouring nations whom they attacked; had no idea of laying the plan of a campaign; of strengthening themselves by alliances, or of establishing secret correspondences in the countries they were about to invade. The instructions which they gave to the commanders of armies were general and simple; those of Abubekr to the two commanders of the army of Syria, Abu Obeidah and Khaled, have come down to us. They will give some notion of the spirit which animated the early Musulmans.

“Remember,” said he, “that you are always in the presence of God; always at the point of death; always in expectation of judgment; always in hope of paradise: avoid, then, injustice and oppression; consult with your brethren, and study to preserve the love and the confidence of your troops. When you fight the battles of the Lord, bear yourselves like men, and turn not your backs upon the enemy. Let your victories never be sullied by the blood of women or of children. Destroy not the palm trees, neither burn the standing corn, nor cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do no damage to the herds and flocks, nor kill any beasts but such as are necessary for your sustenance. Whatsoever treaty you make, be faithful to it, and let your deeds be according to your words. As you advance into the enemy’s country, you will find religious persons who live retired in monasteries, to the end that they may serve God after their manner. You shall not slay them, nor destroy their monasteries. But you will find, also, another sort of men, who belong to the synagogue of Satan, and who have the crown of their heads shaven. To such give no quarter, unless they become Mahommedans, or consent to pay tribute.”

I know not what was the distinction Abubekr thus intended to establish between the two sorts of monks and priests. But the Musulmans were now, for the first time, about to meet the Christians face to face; and Abubekr, who knew the latter only by report, probably acted in obedience to some prejudice of which we are ignorant. We do not find that, when the Musulmans had actually entered the various countries of Christendom

as invaders, they did, in fact, refuse to give quarter to tonsured priests.

The Asiatic provinces of the Greek empire, and Persia, alternately devastated, during the wars of Chosroes and of Heraclius, in the seventh century, underwent a change in their organization and in their population, the causes and the mode of which it is impossible for us to come at any just understanding of, on the very meager and inadequate reports of ancient historians. The fortresses were dismantled; confidence in the strength of the frontiers was gone; the administration was disorganized, and obedience to government was irregular and imperfect. But want, the suffering under a foreign yoke, and probably the flight or the abduction of a great number of slaves, had forced the provincials to act with a little more courage and manliness; to take a more active share in their own affairs; to withdraw less from the toils and perils of war.

It seems that they were once more become soldiers, although very bad soldiers. As we approach the conclusion of the reign of Heraclius, we begin once more to find mention of armies proportioned to the extent of his empire; of armies of a hundred thousand men, though their valour and discipline, indeed, were of a kind which lead us to suppose that they were composed exclusively of provincial and Asiatic militia. The names of the officers, which are incidentally mentioned, are not Greek, but Syrian; the towns seem to recover an independent existence; their own citizens roused themselves in their defence; their own magistrates directed all their affairs; and the interests of the empire are forgotten in the interests of the province. It was not in a country in which all vital energy was annihilated by the long and deadly presence of despotism, but in one in which that energy had lost all its ordinary action from the efforts of anarchy and of foreign occupation, that the Musulman generals had to combat. Hence it doubtless happens, that after victory they invariably found recruits for their own armies from the ranks of those of their enemies.

The Musulmans did not attack the Persians or the Syrians by surprise. They always prefaced the battle by a summons, in which they gave their enemies the threefold choice; either to become converts to Islamism, and in that case to share all the honours, enjoyments, rights, and privileges of true believers; or to submit on condition of paying tribute; or, lastly, to try the for-

tune of war. We have the summons addressed to the city of Jerusalem by Abu Obeidah. It is highly characteristic:—

“Salvation and happiness to whomsoever followeth the straight path. We require you to testify that God is the true God, and that Mahommed is his prophet. If you refuse to do this, promise to pay tribute, and submit yourselves immediately to us. Otherwise I shall bring against you men who find more pleasure in death, than you find in drinking wine and in eating the flesh of swine; and I shall not depart from you till it shall have pleased God to enable me to destroy those among you who fight against me, and to reduce your children to slavery.”

In the course of one year, the very year of the death of Mahommed, (A. D. 632,) Abubekr sent two armies, the one against Persia, the other against Syria. The former, conducted by Khaled, advanced as far as the banks of the Euphrates, and conquered the cities of Anbar and of Hira, near the ruins of Babylon. The kingdom of Persia was, at that time, torn by intestine wars between the successors of Chosroes IV. But the Muslims, instead of pushing their conquests in that direction, recalled Khaled, and sent him to join Abu Obeidah, who commanded the second army in Syria. This general, after proposing to the Romans an alternative which they scarcely understood,—to acknowledge the true God and his prophet, or to pay a tribute,—had attacked Bosra, one of the fortified cities which covered Syria on the Arabian frontier. The Syrians would hardly believe the attack with which they were menaced to be much more formidable than those incursions of wandering bands of Arabs of the desert, to which they were accustomed. Their governor, Romanus, had formed a different judgment; he urged his countrymen to surrender; and when they, in their indignation, deprived him of the command, he treacherously introduced the Arabs by night into the fortress. On the following day, in the presence of his astonished fellow-citizens, he made a public profession of his new faith in the one God and in Mahommed his prophet. This was the beginning of those desertions which inflicted a deadly blow upon the empire. All the discontented; all those whose ambition or cupidity outran their advancement or their fortune; all who had any secret injury to avenge, were sure to be received with open arms in the ranks of the victors, and to share, according to their several merits, either the equality which reigned among the soldiers, or the offices of command

and the splendid rewards which awaited their chiefs. Even in those provinces where the Romans had never been able to levy a single cohort, the Musulman army was recruited by fugitives with a rapidity, a facility, which abundantly proves that it is the government, and not the climate, which gives or which destroys courage.

The surrender of Bosra was quickly followed by the attack on Damascus, one of the most flourishing cities of Syria, and peculiarly favoured as to situation; although the history of the empire, hitherto, scarcely contains a mention of its existence. But the siege of Damascus awakened the attention of Heraclius, who had been returned about four years from his successful wars in Persia, and had relapsed into that luxurious indolence whence we saw him arouse himself for a short time in so surprising a manner. He collected an army, which the Arabs affirm to have been seventy thousand strong; but he did not put himself at its head. His lieutenants endeavoured in vain to raise the siege of Damascus; and, in the disastrous battle of Aiznadin, on the 13th of July, A. D. 633, the fate of the Roman empire in Asia was decided; Heraclius never recovered a defeat in which his army is said to have lost fifty thousand men.

The taking of Damascus, after a siege which lasted through a year; the fall of Emessa, and of Heliopolis, or Balbec; the new victory gained over the Greeks on the banks of the Hieromax, or Yermuk, in November, 636, were followed by the attack on Jerusalem, where the rival religions seemed to be brought into more immediate hostility; for the whole of Christendom had their eyes turned towards the holy city, and regarded the spot, sanctified by the life and sufferings of Christ, and, above all, by the Holy Sepulchre, as the outward pledges of the triumph of his religion. During a siege of four months, the religious enthusiasm of the besieged kept pace with that of the assailants; the walls were thickly planted with crosses, banners blessed by the priests, and miraculous images. But all this zeal was vain and impotent. Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, who directed the efforts of the besieged, was constrained to offer to capitulate. He, however, refused to open the gates of the city until the khaliph Omar, the commander of the faithful, should come in person to receive so precious a deposit, and to guaranty the capitulation by his word. Jerusalem, equally sacred in the eyes of Musulmans as in those of Christians, appeared to the veteran

companions of Mahommed to be a fit object, to the khaliph, of a pious pilgrimage. He set out: the same camel which bore the sovereign of Arabia and a great part of Syria and Persia was also laden with all his baggage; namely, a sack of wheat, a basket of dates, a wooden bowl, and a skin of water. When he came in sight of Jerusalem, the khaliph exclaimed, "God and victorious Lord, grant us a victory unstained with blood!" His attendants pitched his tent of camel's hair cloth; he sat down on the earth; and there he signed the capitulation by which he promised to leave the Christians not only the full enjoyment of liberty of conscience, but the undisputed possession of the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Having completed this act, he entered the city without precaution and without fear, discoursing with the patriarch by the way. He declined the invitation of the latter to offer up his devotions in the church of the Christians, lest his compliance might be quoted as a precedent by his successors, who might resort thither to pray, and thus invade the exclusive property in the temple which he had just guarantied to the Christians. He laid the foundation of a magnificent mosque on the ruins of the temple of Solomon; and at the expiration of ten days he returned in the same simple and unostentatious manner to Medina, where he passed the remainder of his life in offering up his devotions at the tomb of the prophet.

The submission of Jerusalem to the Musulman arms is dated about the year 637, that of Antioch and Aleppo during the campaign of 638. At the same time Heraclius, who had not appeared at the head of the army, secretly fled from a province which he did not dare to defend, and which he had no hope of revisiting. Escaping by a feint from his courtiers and his soldiers, he embarked with a few friends for Constantinople. His eldest son Constantine, who commanded at Cæsarea, fled as soon as he heard of the emperor's departure; and the army under his command dispersed, or went over to the ranks of the enemy. Tyre and Tripoli were given up to the Arabs by treachery, and the remaining cities of Syria opened their gates by capitulation. Abu Obeidah, who dreaded for the victors the luxurious delights of Antioch, would not permit his soldiers to remain there more than three days; but the aged khaliph, who was austere to himself alone, regretted that the Musulmans had not enjoyed a little more of the fruits of their victories. "God has not forbidden," he wrote to his general, "the

use of the good things of this world to true believers and those who practise good works: you ought, therefore, to have granted them longer repose, and have allowed them to partake of the enjoyments the country offers. Every Saracen who has not a family in Arabia is at liberty to marry in Syria; and all are permitted to buy as many female slaves as they may need."

A contagious disease, which attacked the Musulmans shortly after the conquest of Syria, disabled them from taking advantage of the khaliph's indulgence. By this malady they lost twenty-five thousand effective troops; and among them their leader, Abu Obeidah. The valiant warrior who had seconded him, and who in all moments of difficulty and danger assumed the command, which he afterwards surrendered back to his chief, Khaled, 'the Sword of God,' died three years later at Emessa.

The conquest of Persia, which Khaled had commenced, had been followed up by other Saracen generals. Yezdegerd, grandson of Chosroes, who had ascended the throne in 632, and whose reign has been rendered famous, not for any personal merit he displayed, but from its relation to an astronomical cycle, was attacked by an army of thirty thousand Musulmans. The battle of Cadesia, a place sixty leagues from Bagdad, decided the fate of the Persian monarchy, (A. D. 636.) It lasted three whole days, and the Saracens lost seven thousand five hundred men: but the Persian army was annihilated, the standard of the monarchy was carried off; the fertile province of Assyria, or Irak, was conquered, and the possession of it guarantied by the foundation of Basra, or, as Europeans called it, Bussora, on the Euphrates, below its junction with the Tigris, twelve leagues from the sea. Seyd, general of the Musulmans, afterwards advanced beyond the Tigris, in the month of March, 637. He entered Madain, or Ctesiphon, the capital of Persia, by assault; and the accumulated treasures of ages were abandoned to the Musulman plunderers. The conquerors, dissatisfied with the site of the ancient capital, founded a new one, to which they gave the name of Kufah, on the right bank of the Euphrates. Yezdegerd, however, who had taken refuge in the mountains, kept together for some time the wrecks of the Persian empire; but, after a series of defeats, just as he was in the act of entreating a miller to transport him in his boat across a river on the last frontier of his kingdom, he was overtaken by some Musulman horsemen, and slain, A. D. 651, the nineteenth year of his disastrous

reign. With him expired the second Persian dynasty, that of the Sassanides.

Syria and Persia had been but feebly defended by the Christians and the Magi. Egypt was voluntarily given up by the Copts, who, severed from the dominant church by the dispute concerning the two natures and the two wills of Christ, preferred the yoke of the Musulmans to the persecution of the orthodox. Long before their surrender, even during the lifetime of Mahommed, they had entered into a negotiation with the Arabs, their neighbours; but the latter, full of the ideas they had imbibed from their assiduous study of the books of the Old Testament, estimated the glory and power of Egypt rather by the grandeur ascribed to the Pharaohs, than by their own eyes. Omar, urged by the valiant Amru, one of the warriors who had contributed the most powerfully to the conquest of Syria, had given his consent to the invasion of Egypt. He, however, quickly repented the having sanctioned so daring an enterprise, and despatched a courier after Amru, who was advancing across the desert with no more than four thousand soldiers, ordering him to retrace his steps, if he was still within the confines of Syria; but to regard the die as cast, and boldly to pursue his way, if he had already crossed the frontiers of Egypt. Amru, distrusting the irresolution of his sovereign, would not open the letter until he was actually on the enemy's soil. He then assembled a council of war, and took all the chiefs to witness that the orders of the khaliph, no less than those of Heaven, bound him to continue his march. It was in the month of June, 638; and Pelusium, which surrendered after a month's siege, opened to the Saracens the entrance to the country.

The Romans had transported the seat of government in Egypt to Alexandria; and Memphis, the ancient capital, not far from the Pyramids, had sunk to the rank of a secondary city; nevertheless, its population was still very considerable, and, as the Greeks inhabited Alexandria by preference, Memphis had remained almost exclusively an Egyptian or Coptic city. It was before this city that Amru appeared in the summer of 638, or rather before the suburb of Babylon, or Mizrah, which was on the right bank of the river and on the Arab side; while the ancient Memphis, as well as the Pyramids, were on the left or Libyan side. The siege was protracted through seven months, during which period Amru renewed his negotiations with the Coptic Monothelites and their general Mokawkas. A tribute of two pieces of gold for every man

above the age of sixteen was the price paid for entire liberty of conscience. Benjamin, the patriarch of the Jacobites, came forth out of the desert to pay homage to the conqueror; throughout the whole province to the south of Memphis the Copts took arms, attacked the Greeks and their clergy, massacred a great number of them, and put the remainder to flight. The antique Memphis at length opened her gates; but the victorious Saracens preferred the suburb of Mizrah as a residence, on account of its greater proximity to their own country. They gave it the name of Kahirah,* or the city of victory. The population insensibly passed over from the left to the right bank of the river for the sake of being near the caravans which arrived from the desert; and the ancient city of Sesostris was soon little more than a city of tombs.

The conquest of Egypt could be secured only by that of the Delta, whither all the fugitive Greeks from the valley of the Nile had retired; and by that of Alexandria, the second city of the world for population and for wealth.

The port of this metropolis, open to the Greek navy, might receive constant re-enforcements, and introduce hostile armies into the heart of the country; whilst the inhabitants, inflamed with religious zeal, and exasperated by the treachery they had just experienced from the Copts, were ready to afford powerful assistance to the garrison. Amru led the Musulman army across the Delta, where his valour displayed itself in daily combats. He laid siege to the city, the circumference of which was, at that time, ten miles: but as it is defended on one side by the sea, and on the other by the lake Mareotis, the ramparts exposed to attack did not exceed two miles and a half in length, at the utmost. For fourteen months the siege was carried on with a fury rarely paralleled in the history of warfare. Amru was carried off by the besieged in one of their sorties, but was not recognised. His haughty demeanour, however, began to excite suspicion, when a slave, who had been taken prisoner with his master, with singular presence of mind, hit him a blow on the face and bade him hold his tongue in the presence of his superiors. He then despatched him to the Musulman camp, under pretext of obtaining money for his own ransom. The simplicity of the early associates of the prophet rendered it impossible to distinguish the highest from the lowest by their dress, and the slave of Amru easily passed for his master.

* The Italians, from whom we adopted it, corrupted this to Cairo.—*Transl.*

At length, on the 22d of December, A. D. 640, the Musulmans found an entrance into Alexandria, while the Greeks took to their ships, and evacuated the capital of Egypt.

“I have taken,” said Amru, in his despatch to the khaliph, “the great city of the west. It would be impossible for me to describe all its grandeur, all its beauty. Let it suffice you to hear that it contains four thousand palaces, four thousand baths, four hundred theatres or places of amusement: twelve thousand shops for the sale of vegetables alone, fit for the food of man, and forty thousand tributary Jews. The city has been taken by force of arms, without treaty or capitulation, and the Musulmans are impatient to seize the fruits of victory.”

But the virtuous Omar steadfastly refused to grant the license for pillage which seemed to be thus demanded of him. A census was taken of the inhabitants. All those who remained faithful to their ancient religion, whether Jacobites or Melchites (*i. e.* orthodox,) obtained, on payment of the annual tribute, the liberty of conscience guarantied by the laws of the prophet. The number, however, of the converts who adopted the faith of the conquerors, —thus passing from dependence to power, from poverty to wealth, —was very great in this province, as well as in all others, and abundantly compensated for the losses suffered by the conquering army, although twenty-three thousand Musulmans had perished in the seige. Yet the mass of the population remained Christian; and even now, after twelve ages of oppression, the Coptic church in Upper Egypt, and the Greek in Alexandria, are not entirely annihilated.

It will, doubtless, be asked, why I pass over in silence an event more celebrated than the conquest of Egypt itself; the sentence pronounced by Omar against the Alexandrian library—“These books are useless if they contain only the word of God; they are pernicious if they contain any thing else;”—and the four thousand baths of Alexandria, heated for six months with the manuscripts which contained all the learning of the ancient world. But this marvellous history was related, for the first time, six centuries later, by Abulfaraj, on the confines of Media. The earlier and Christian historians, Eutychius and Elmacin, make no mention of it whatever. It is in direct opposition to the precepts of the Koran, and to the profound veneration of the Musulmans for every scrap of paper on which the name of God may chance to be written. Moreover, the ancient library collected by the magnifi-

cence of the Ptolemies had long before been destroyed, nor have we any evidence that it had been replaced at any later period.

Heraclius, who had outlived both his power and his glory, learned at Constantinople the loss of Alexandria. This was the last calamity of his reign. He died fifty days after, on the 11th of February, 641.

During the reigns of the first two khaliphs, reigns signalized by such brilliant conquests, the Saracens had lost nothing of the enthusiasm with which their prophet had inspired them. No private ambition, no jealousy, no personal interest or passion, had as yet alloyed that zeal for enlarging the kingdom of God which turned all their efforts towards war, and made them meet martyrdom with as much exultation as victory. The commanders of armies, born in free Arabia, accustomed to complete independence of mind and will, while they rendered implicit obedience, felt not that they were subject to a master; they made no use of their will, simply because it was so perfectly in conformity with that of their chief; because the execution of his orders was no act of submission or concession. But Omar, though younger than Mahommed, had passed his seventieth year at the close of his reign. His contemporaries, or even those who had been formed under him, were no longer in the vigour of their age; a new generation had arisen in the government and in the army. It had, above all, been recruited from conquered countries, and though it still shared that religious enthusiasm which is fostered and excited in great assemblages of men, it already introduced into Islamism a new character and new ambitions.

The two khaliphs who succeeded, formed, like their predecessors, in the intimate society of the prophet; like them, purely Arab, and residing constantly at Medina, preserved, unmingled, the pure and ardent faith, and the simplicity of manners, which he had implanted and prescribed; but while the two earlier, Abubekr and Omar, who, in accordance with their age, were indebted to this simplicity for their most brilliant successes, the two latter, Othman and Ali, whose contemporaries no longer resembled them, who were surrounded by men who understood them not, and whom they did not understand, introduced confusion and civil war into this government, so remarkable for its simplicity. After them, when Ali had been succeeded by Moavia, the seat of empire was transferred from Medina to Damascus; oriental despotism succeeded to the liberty of the desert;

fanaticism was still kept alive in the army, but a new principle of government guided the prudence or concealed the vices of the Ommiades.

In the twelfth year of his reign Omar was mortally wounded by an assassin, who sought to revenge some private injury. The khaliph might have endeavoured to bequeath his power to his son; he might, too, have tried to transmit his throne to Ali, son of Abu Taleb, who, as representative of the elder branch of the Koreishites, as husband of Fatima, the beloved daughter of Mahommed, and as decorated from his earliest youth with the title of Vizir of the Prophet, seemed to combine every claim to the suffrages of the Musulmans. Omar would not take upon himself the responsibility of so mighty a decision. He nominated six of the veteran companions of Mahommed, to whom he left the election. He died on the 6th of November, 644.

The choice of these representatives of Islamism fell on Othman, who had been Mahommed's secretary. He had already attained to extreme age, and was incapable of supporting the burden laid upon him. Yet during his reign, which lasted eleven years, from 644 to 655, the Musulmans completed the subjugation of Persia; they extended their conquests into Cilicia as far as the Euxine; some of their armies traversed Asia Minor, and menaced Constantinople; others repulsed two Greek expeditions which tried to effect a landing in Egypt, and, in the year 647, they advanced as far as Tripoli in Africa. Yet all these conquests did not suffice to maintain the glory they had acquired during the twelve preceding years. Othman, deceived in the objects of his choice, betrayed by those he trusted, vainly lavishing the treasures of the state without securing partisans, was assailed at Medina by the complaints of the people. A new sect, the Charegites, (Kharadjis,) demanded complete liberty, which, they pretended, could be surrendered only to the inspirations of the prophet, and belonged of right to every Arab and to every Musulman. The armies even drew nigh; they encamped within a league of Medina; and sent to summon the aged khaliph either to administer justice better, or to descend from the post of commander of the faithful. The guards deserted the gates of the city and of the palace; and, after some hesitation, assassins, headed by a son of Abubekr, the brother of Ayesha, who, though the youngest of Mahommed's wives, was now called the mother of the faithful, poniarded Othman on his throne, while he covered his heart with the Koran.

Ali had had no part in the murder of Omar or of Othman. Respected by the Musulmans as the favourite, the son-in-law, and the father of the sole descendants of the prophet, he had, nevertheless, been rejected in the three preceding elections, and had been kept back from a station which he regarded as his of right. At the death of Othman, on the 18th of June, 655, all the Koreishites declared in his favour. Ali was proclaimed khaliph by the majority of the Arabs; but the commanders of the Musulman armies would no longer acknowledge those peaceful chiefs, whose functions were more than half religious, and who had shared neither their perils nor their victories; and Ayesha, who had always been jealous of Ali, and had had a great share in the troubles of the preceding reign, instigated the soldiers to defend their independence by arms.

Ali had preserved all the simplicity of manners of the first converts to Islamism. At the hour of prayer he repaired to the mosque on foot, clad in a light garment of cotton, with a coarse turban on his head, carrying his sandals in his hand, and leaning on his bow instead of a staff. Renowned among the Musulmans as a saint, a poet, and a warrior; as the faithful husband of Fatima, who had survived her father but nine months; as the father of Hassan and Hossein, whom the prophet had often held upon his knees; he had lost nothing of his valour during the twenty-four years he had passed in repose at the tomb of Mahommed: but he soon gave occasion to think that his prudence was not equal to his high reputation. He had given some disgust to Talha and Zobeir, two of the most valiant Arab chiefs, who raised the standard of revolt against him at Mecca, usurped the government of Basra and of Assyria, and invited Ayesha to repair to their camp. Ali marched against them to the walls of Basra. A terrible battle, in which he suffered from great inferiority of numbers, took place between the two armies, in one of which was seen the son-in-law, in the other the widow of Mahommed. Ayesha, after riding along the ranks, remained, seated in a palanquin, or covered chair, borne on the back of a camel, in the midst of the fight. Seventy men were killed or wounded while in the act of driving the camel, which gave its name to this, the first battle fought between Musulmans, and celebrated as the Battle of the Camel. Ali was at length victorious. Ayesha, though a prisoner, was led back with honour to the tomb of the prophet.

At the same time, Moavia, son of Abu Sophyan, the ancient rival of Mahommed, had been chosen khaliph in Syria. The command of that province had been delegated to him by Omar, and had been equally marked by moderation and by valour. On the news of the death of Othman he had declared himself the avenger of the commander of the faithful; he displayed his blood-stained garments in the mosque of Damascus; and sixty thousand Arabs, or converted Syrians, had sworn to follow his standard. Amru, the conqueror of Egypt, and the most justly celebrated among the Musulman generals, was the first to salute Moavia with the title of khaliph. Ali marched against him: all the forces of the conquerors of Asia were collected; and, if we may believe the Arabian historians, (too prone, indeed, to seek to astonish rather than to instruct the reader,) the two armies remained face to face for nearly a twelvemonth. Ninety battles were fought: forty-five thousand men perished on the side of Moavia, twenty-five thousand on that of Ali. At length the whole body of the Musulmans demanded that, in conformity with the law of the Koran, the two rivals should refer their dispute to the decision of two arbitrators. The two khaliphs submitted to the will of the army. Ali returned to Kufah on the Euphrates, Moavia to Damascus; and their two representatives, Abu Musa and Amru, were left to decide which of the two was to retain the dignity of commander of the faithful. To depose both, and elect a third, seemed to be the most impartial course. Upon this the umpires agreed, and Abu Musa announced to the people that Ali had ceased to be khaliph; when Amru, outwitting his colleague, instantly declared that Moavia consequently remained in undisputed possession of the khaliphate. From this act of treachery dates the schism which still exists between the Shiahs and the Sunnis. The former, and more especially the Persians, regard the deposition of Ali as illegal, and even the succession of the three khaliphs who intervened between him and Mahommed. The latter, and especially the Turks, esteem the succession of Moavia as legitimate from that time.

Civil war broke out afresh, and continued until the end of the reign of Ali, A. D. 656—661. The empire founded on such a long course of victories seemed on the point of crumbling to ruin. Three Kharadjis, or fanatics of the sect which incessantly inveighed against the usurpation of power, which they claimed as the property of the whole nation, resolved to devote their

lives for the simultaneous destruction of the three men who caused the greatest effusion of Musulman blood. The two fanatics who were appointed to assassinate Amru and Moavia were arrested; Ali fell under the dagger of the third, on the 24th of January, 661. He was 63 years of age.

Hassan, the eldest son of Ali, and grandson of the prophet, was recognised by the sect of the Shiahs as successor to his father; but being of an unambitious temper, and desirous of putting an end to the civil wars which had already caused the effusion of such torrents of blood, he entered into a treaty with Moavia, and, at the end of six months, renounced all claim to the khaliphate.

The zeal of Moavia was not so disinterested as that of his predecessors. During a reign of twenty years, which extended into extreme old age, he healed the wounds inflicted on the Musulman empire by civil war, and turned the arms of the faithful once more against those whom they called infidels—against the Turks beyond the Oxus, and against the Christians in Asia Minor and Africa. For seven years his troops laid siege to Constantinople, while other armies traversed Libya, and founded the new capital of that province called Kairwan,* at twelve miles from the sea and fifty from Tunis. But the conquests of the Musulmans were no longer undertaken with the sole view of extending the reign of the Koran; they now served to establish the supremacy of a new sovereign family, which united the despotic habits of the ancient monarchs of the East to the fanaticism of new sectaries. Moavia had quitted Arabia to return no more: he preferred the abject submission and servile habits of the Syrians to the haughty independence of the Bedouins. He succeeded in causing his voluptuous son Yezid to be acknowledged as his colleague, thus securing his succession by anticipation; and this transmission of power being once admitted, the lieutenancy of the prophet became hereditary in the family of Abu Sophyan, his earliest and most inveterate enemy.

The Fatimides, the descendants of Ali and of the daughter of Mahommed, had neither wished to excite a civil war, nor chose to recognise what they regarded as a usurpation, nor to cease to combat for the true faith. Hossein, Ali's second son, had served in the second siege of Constantinople. But, when

* Called, by Gibbon and others, Cairoan.—*Transl.*

the vices of Yezid taught the Musulmans the weight and the infamy of the new yoke imposed upon them, Hossein, who had retired to Medina, lent an ear to the overtures of a party who declared their desire of restoring the sovereignty to the blood of the prophet and the race of the Koreishites. A hundred and forty thousand men, it was affirmed, were ready to draw the sword in his cause. Hossein crossed the desert with a small troop of friends devoted to his family; but, on arriving on the frontiers of Assyria, he found that the insurrection in his favour had been already suppressed, and that he was hemmed in on every side by enemies. Retreat was impossible; submission appeared to him unworthy of his name and lineage. In vain did he exhort his friends to provide for their own safety; not one would desert him. Thirty-two horsemen and forty foot soldiers resolved to face the whole army of Obeidallah, the governor of Kufah, with the full knowledge that it had five thousand horse alone. But there was not a single Musulman who did not tremble at the thought of laying hands on the son of Ali, the grandson of the prophet. Not one dared to stand the charge of the Fatimides. They had not, however, the same scruple in attacking them from a distance with their arrows, because they could not distinguish upon whom their strokes alighted. Every soul of the Fatimides perished. Hossein was killed the last—supporting in his arms his son and his nephew, wounded and expiring. Thus, on the 10th of October, 680, was the family of Mahommed crushed in the very empire of which he was the founder. Hossein, however, left a son, whose posterity, down to the ninth generation, furnished the imams, or high priests of Islamism, who are to this day the object of veneration to the Persians, and whom the khaliphs of the race of the Ommiades did not dare to persecute in the free land of Arabia.

CHAPTER XV.

Reigns of the Successors of Moaviaһ unworthy of notice.—Extinction of the Ommiades.—Line of the Abbasides.—Splendour of the Palace of Bagdad contrasted with the Simplicity of the early Khaliphs.—Change in the Musulman Nation.—Character of the Syrians, Persians, and Egyptians.—Influence of the Mahommedan Religion.—Cultivation of Science and Letters among the Arabs.—Energy excited by the Doctrines of Mahommed.—Simultaneous Attacks on the East and West of Europe under the Ommiades.—State of the Greek Empire after the Death of Heraclius.—His Successors.—Constans II.—Constantine Pogonatus.—Invention of the Greek Fire.—Consequent Defeat of the Saracens.—Justinian II.—His Atrocities.—Second Attack on Constantinople, under Moslemah.—Leo the Isaurian.—His Character.—His successful Defence.—Constantine Copronymus.—Conquests of the Saracens in the West.—Africa.—Final Destruction of Carthage.—Subjugation and Conversion of the Moors.—Introduction of the Saracens into Spain.—Visigothic Kings and People.—Rodrigo.—Insult offered to Count Julian.—His Revenge.—Landing of Tarik.—Defeat of Rodrigo.—Successes of Musa.—Dangerous Position of France.—Her internal Condition.—Conquest of Narbonne by Zama.—Defeat of Eudes, Duke of Aquitaine.—Victories of Abderrahman.—Charles Le Martel.—Battle of the Plain of Poitiers.—Great Defeat of the Saracens. A. D. 661—750.

WE have thought it expedient to follow out, with uninterrupted attention, the history of the author of one of the mightiest revolutions that ever changed the face of the world; we have also endeavoured to make the reader acquainted with his first disciples, those warrior apostles who so strangely blended in themselves the austere virtues of the anchoret with the boundless ambition of the usurper; but having shown how the empire of the khaliphs was founded; having reached the period when the palace of Damascus was given up to an hereditary line of voluptuous princes, who were strangers to their troops, and whose reigns are as little marked by political wisdom as by valour, we shall not bestow on the quickly forgotten names of Yezid, Moaviaһ II., Mervan, Abdul-Malek, and Valid, a degree of care and examination which has been denied to the almost domestic history of the Merovingian kings, or those of the Lombards and Burgundians. It will be sufficient to state that, after the elevation of Moaviaһ, which (A. D. 661) placed on the throne that branch of the family of the Koreishites which was called,

after his grandfather, the house of the Ommiades, fourteen khaliphs reigned successively, during a space of ninety years, in the palace of Damascus, until, in the year 750, Mervan II. was deposed and put to death by Abul Abbas al Saffah, who descended from Abbas, the uncle of Mahommed. With him commenced the reign of the dynasty of the Abbasides, rendered illustrious by the foundation of Bagdad, where it fixed its residence, as well as by the generous protection it extended to letters.

Nothing, however, in the palace of the khaliphs was calculated to remind the observer of any connexion between the objects before him and the founder of an austere religion; nothing betokened it as the dwelling of the representatives of a prophet, whose mode of life had never deviated from the simplicity of the poorest Bedouin. A numerous guard, bedizened with gold and bristling with steel, kept watch at the gate; the apartments within were decorated with every ornament that wealth and luxurious art could procure; every delicacy of the most sumptuous table was sought for, to gratify the palate of the commander of the faithful; and when he travelled, four hundred camels were hardly sufficient to carry even the apparatus of his kitchen. Seven thousand eunuchs were employed in attendance on his person, or as a guard to his women. The khaliph made it an invariable rule to appear at the great mosque for prayer, and to preach there on Friday, the day which the Musulmans devote to public worship; but this was the only occasion on which he presented himself to the people, and he was then accompanied with all the pomp of royalty. The rest of his life was passed in the Paradise of Damascus,—the name given by the people of the East to the gardens of the palace,—in the midst of gushing waters, under fresh and leafy shades, and breathing an air loaded with perfume.

But whilst the character of the sovereigns was utterly changed, the still recent nation of Musulmans retained that impelling spirit of activity and energy which seemed to promise them the mastery of the world; and which would soon have enabled them to complete their conquest, if they had not been abandoned by their chiefs. This absolute transformation of the eastern nations, effected in so short a space of time, and invested with a character as permanent as it was opposite to that which they had hitherto exhibited, is one of the wonders of the middle ages most deserving attention. The house of the Ommiades was never be-

loved nor zealously served by the Arabs; its armies, therefore, were composed of the new converts, the Syrians, the Persians, and the Egyptians. But, during the fifteen hundred years that these nations had been acting a prominent part on the theatre of the world, and had been rendered conspicuous by the light of history, there had been time to ascertain their character. It had been subjected to various trials by the different governments and religions of the ancient Egyptians and Persians; by those of the Greeks who succeeded Alexander, of the Romans, and of the Christian Greeks. They had ever exhibited the same superstition and pusillanimity; the same eager readiness to believe the marvellous; the same proneness to pollute their worship with every extravagance, and to enervate their souls by unrestrained indulgence in sensual pleasure. Suddenly they embraced with enthusiastic ardour a religion which interposes an abyss of separation between the God of spirits and his earthly creatures, which rejects all anthropomorphism, every outward image, every thing in religious worship that can move the imagination through the senses; which recognises no miracle, and seeks aid from above by prayer alone; which looks for divine protection, but guarantees it not by the assurance of prophecy, nor regards success or defeat as a judgment from Heaven:—a religion whose only pontiff is the chief of the state, whose only priests are officers of law; but which, nevertheless, for ages, maintained itself unimpaired. If, however, it ultimately became corrupt, this is to be attributed, not to the dispositions of the people, apparently so contrary to its spirit, but to the vices of the government; to the pernicious influence of a despotism which it had neither inculcated nor sanctioned, but which the prodigious extension of the military power it fostered had rendered triumphant.

The rapid transformation of the pusillanimous Syrians into valiant Musulmans may be looked upon as a most brilliant example of the advantages a legislator may derive from that thirst for knowledge and improvement, that love of action, inherent in man; and which, once aroused by a laudable object, suffices to itself, and becomes its own reward. The enjoyment of repose is as nothing compared with that which accompanies a sense of progression; the mere preservation of existence ceases to be regarded as a good, when contrasted with its development. The aged, who live in the past, may entreat that their long-formed habits should not be interfered with, and that no fresh efforts

should be required of them; and thus do nations, grown old in reverence for the very weaknesses of their chiefs, often believe that the enjoyments of the moment would be disturbed by any activity, and that all change is hostile to happiness. But the young who echo these doctrines, so unsuited to their age, do not know themselves. Teach them to think and to act, and they will soon find the most intense enjoyments, whether social or sensual, worthless, in comparison with the new life they acquire from the culture and exercise of all their powers. The memory of every man who has withdrawn from scenes of vanity or of vice, turns back with intense satisfaction to those moments of danger, perhaps even of distress, when his soul put forth its whole strength; when he learned to know the treasure he possessed within himself; when he discovered all his courage, his patience, his industry, his force of comprehension, his activity.

Mahommed had stimulated the nations of the East both to think and to act; and the enjoyment of thought and action was as lively and as deep as it was new to them. To attempt, upon the ruins of polytheism, or of that gross superstition which, in the East, supplanted Christianity, whilst adopting its name, to establish a purely spiritual religion, which should give the simplest and most abstract idea of the Deity, it was necessary to call to his aid the whole power of reason; especially as he did not support his mission by miracles, and as his disciples, whatever their enthusiasm, received no other testimony of the divinity of his mission than his own eloquence. In fact, Mahommed, in his conferences at the Kaaba with the merchants, travellers, and pilgrims from all parts of Arabia, exhorted them most earnestly to reflect, to descend into their own hearts, to examine their ancient creed by the light of reason; and, from the immensity of his works, from the contemplation of all that is pure in human nature, to rise to the knowledge of the Divine Being. The meditation of many years, and perfect familiarity with the arguments, had elevated the reasoning powers of the orator to a superiority over those of his antagonists; and his eloquence on the subject which singly engrossed his attention almost outstripped his thoughts; so that it seemed to himself, as it must have appeared to others, the work of inspiration. When these discourses were afterwards collected, and revered as oracles assigning the limits of faith, of morals, and of justice, the effect they produced on the posterity of his followers was of a nature

diametrically opposite to that which they had worked upon himself and his immediate disciples. They had habituated the newly converted Musulmans to reflection; they accustomed their descendants to a subjection of their reason to authority: for the former, they had overthrown long-standing barriers; for the latter, they had built up new ones: and to the Musulmans, as to other religionists, the time was come, when the depositories of the revelations which formed the basis of their creed interdicted the only exercise of the mind which leads to genuine faith—inquiry. But, at the time when the religion of Islam was founded, whilst it was spreading with such rapid progress, the Musulman was not content with simply assenting to the new truths which had freed his mind from the errors of idolatry, he made them a subject of incessant meditation; he strove to furnish himself with arguments for their exposition; to strengthen them by his eloquence, as well as to spread them by his sword. The prayers which he repeated five times a day gave fervour to his meditations, without varying their object. Religious oratory constituted a study no less important to the general of the army than the art of war: every believer might in his turn occupy the pulpit, when he was filled with his sacred subject and believed himself inspired: and as political and religious duties were not separated, the constant mixture of the most sublime meditations with the counsels of worldly prudence, addressed to a nation or an army, gave to the eloquence of the Arabs a character altogether peculiar.

We find, accordingly, that the progress of eloquence and poetry among the Arabs was not less rapid than that of their conquests. A nation whose prophet, whose legislator, could not write, was, at the end of a century, the only one which displayed the least activity in the world of letters; the only one labouring in the field of discovery; the only one perpetually striving to increase the stock of human science, of which the Greeks and the Romans seemed the natural conservators, but which they abandoned to destruction. It is impossible to tell what point would have been reached by the ardent genius of a people of the south, who darted onward in their career with such vigour, if it had not been checked by political impediments, and held in thralldom by the jealousy of power.

Mahommed established neither liberty nor despotism: accustomed to the former, he desired not to alarm the latter by deci-

sions wholly at variance with it; but a man of genius, at a time when he is laying the foundations of an empire, when he is directing a mighty revolution, submits with difficulty to the republican forms which cramp his conceptions, and thwart the execution of his grandest projects. These forms give us the expression of the will and of the wisdom of an average of mankind: a power emanating from the people, and accurately representing them, must eventually effect the triumph of what may be called the common sense of nations,—of that degree of reason and instruction which are generally diffused among them. But this common sense is no less superior to the common sense of the average of kings, to the depravity of courts, to their indifference to national interests, than it is inferior to the intelligence of great men. The hero, who by the force of his own genius raises himself to the head of a nation, will wish to bequeath the welfare of that nation to the care of a senate, because his senate will be wiser than his son: but it will not be so profoundly sagacious as himself: and the truly great man, from a consciousness of his own genius, will strive to emancipate himself from laws made for those less gifted than himself, just as a man of inferior ability will endeavour to free himself from them, that he may not be the publisher of his own incapacity. Mahommed neither destroyed nor preserved the republican institutions of Mecca; but he exalted above them the power of inspiration, that divine voice which must silence all the counsels of human prudence. He organized no political despotism; it was the effect of the gift of prophecy alone.

The first successors of Mahommed, in declaring themselves the directors of the prayers of the people, made no pretensions to the power of prophecy. They issued orders, nevertheless, in the name of him whose lieutenants they called themselves, and they were obeyed without hesitation; but it cannot be said that, even then, their authority was despotic. They were the organs of the public will: one single thought, one sole passion, absorbed every Musulman; every effort of their lives ought to tend—in fact, did tend—to establish the triumph of their faith. The first four khaliphs attempted nothing in their own name; they reaped no personal enjoyment from the immense power which they derived from a confidence reposed rather in their piety than in their wisdom; no jealousy was excited by the exercise of their authority, which, indeed, they resigned almost entirely to the delegates whom they deemed most worthy. The companions of Mahommed,

the heroes to whom the command of his armies had been given, could have no other end, no other projects, than those which the prophet himself had entertained. The exercise of their power was, therefore, not limited by instructions. They received it less from the khaliph than from the nation, and from religion; and their lowest delegates were actuated by the same common impulse. While they enforced the strictest discipline, they felt themselves free, they felt themselves sovereigns; for in executing their own will, they fulfilled the will of all. Thus, during the most brilliant epoch of the Musulman conquests, the army, urging forward its generals, without the check of any responsibility, unrestrained by any guarantee for the preservation of liberty, acted continually with the spirit of a republic.

It was this universal passion, this devotion of all to the cause of all, which developed in a manner so brilliant, so unexpected, the activity of the people of the East; which inspired with so much courage and endurance the sons of the pusillanimous Syrians; which suggested to them such ingenious manœuvres in the art of war; and which maintained their constancy unshaken through danger or privation. This complete self-education, this all-pervading sentiment, put in action every talent, every virtue they possessed: rendered them happy under all the chances of war and of fortune, and constituted a reward for their heroism, far more certain than the black-eyed houries promised them in paradise. The most splendid successes are the unfailing result of the gratification of this noblest of passions pervading a whole people. Patriotism, glory, and individual happiness flourished in the army and on the frontiers, long after a mortal corruption had seized upon the centre. The obscure, inglorious khaliphs of Damascus and Bagdad continued to conquer countries which they never saw, of which they knew not even the name, long after their government had become stained with all the vices of a despotic court; long after the most illustrious men had fallen a sacrifice to the caprices of the tyrant, and the election or deposition of the commanders of a brave soldiery was habitually the work of the vilest intrigues. The cause of this is to be sought in the fact, that these victorious troops fought, not for the khaliph, but for Islamism; that they obeyed, not the orders from the palace, but the dictates of their own conscience; that they believed themselves free, and the ministers of God. It was not till a considerable time after they had been accustomed to scenes of civil war, to treachery and baseness in

their leaders, that they discovered they were no longer citizens, and therefore ceased to be men.

During the reign of the Omniades, the khaliphs attacked Europe on the east and on the west at the same time,—in Greece and in Spain. Their victories in either country seemed at first to threaten their adversaries with destruction; nor, so long as the struggle continued, would it have been easy to predict, that the issue would ultimately be favourable to Christendom.

The Greek empire was situated just opposite to that of the Arabs, on the frontiers of Europe: on it, therefore, rested the hopes of Christendom; no alliance, however, united it to those lately formed Latin states, with which it had a common interest in the support of religion. The Germanic nations dreamt not of the danger which might one day extend even to them: their sentiments towards the Romans, whom they had conquered, and had no farther occasion to fear, were those of unaltered contempt and hatred. The Greeks, then, were left to struggle single-handed with the Musulmans, and when it was seen in how short a time Heraclius had lost his Asiatic provinces, little confidence could be placed in the means of defence left to his successors.

After the death of Heraclius, the throne of Constantinople still continued in his family for seventy years. (A. D. 641—711.) Constans II., his grandson, whose reign, from the year 641 to 668, corresponds to those of Othman, Ali, and Moavia, or to the time of the first civil wars of the Musulmans, passed the greater part of his life at Rome and in Sicily. Some acts of tyranny, and his leaning to the monothelitic heresy, which, still more than his crimes, excited the hatred of the clergy, had deprived him entirely of the affection of his subjects. The Lombards, at that time, suffered the Greek settlements in Italy to remain at peace. Constans preferred a residence in these Latin towns to one in a capital which only served to remind him of his misdeeds. He owed his safety entirely to the civil wars which, at the same moment, distracted all his enemies, the Lombards, the Saracens, and the Avars: he was not in a condition to resist any one of them.

Nor was Constantine Pogonatus, his son, who reigned from 668 to 685, of a character calculated to inspire a higher degree of confidence. Jealous of his brothers, he caused their noses to be cut off, because the army, in a moment of seditious riot, had

demanded that three Augustuses should rule upon earth, in like manner as three divine persons reigned in heaven. His government, as yet, was distinguished for nothing but those petty and base passions which seemed indigenous in the Christian seraglio of Constantinople. Moavia, as soon as he had suppressed the first civil wars which divided Islam, (A. D. 668—675,) advanced to attack him, apparently with a view of expiating the Musulman blood which Musulmans had shed. No judicious precaution had been taken for the defence of the capital; the Hellespont and the Bosphorus remained open, and a Saracen fleet, from the ports of Syria and Egypt, came every summer, for seven years, and disembarked an army of Musulmans under the walls of Constantinople. However, although the coast had not been defended, the fortifications of the town had been restored; the throng of refugees from all the provinces of Asia had increased the number of inhabitants, and swelled the list of defenders of the capital; some military habits had been acquired during their long retreat; the danger impending over their country and their church had awakened a degree of religious enthusiasm; and those, who would have shrunk from the fight in the open field, showed themselves able to defend the ramparts.

But Constantinople was indebted for its preservation to a new and fortunate discovery, which chemistry accidentally opened to the Greeks, at a time when there was neither courage, patriotism, nor talent, in either commander or men, sufficient to repel so formidable an enemy. An inhabitant of Heliopolis (there were two towns of that name, one in Syria and the other in Egypt) named Callinicus, discovered a composition of naphtha or oil of bitumen, pitch, and sulphur, which, once set on fire, could not be extinguished by water; which adhered to wood with destructive activity, and consumed with equal facility a single ship or a whole fleet; and which, when thrown on the combatants, insinuated itself between the joints of their armour, and destroyed them by a death of torture. Callinicus, a subject of the khaliphs, but a Christian, brought his secret to Constantinople, and used it in defence of Christendom. This secret was preserved till the middle of the fourteenth century, when it was superseded by the still more tremendous invention of gunpowder. Its qualities are very imperfectly known to us. The crusaders, who called the Greeks "Grégeois," named it "le feu Grégeois," Greek fire; while the Greeks themselves called it "liquid or marine fire." The prows

of vessels, and the ramparts of towns, were furnished with tubes, by means of which this blazing oil was thrown to a great distance; a piston projected it with great velocity into the air, as soon as it came in contact with which, it became ignited by some process unknown to us: the devoted victims saw it approaching in the form of a fiery serpent, till at last it fell in a burning shower on vessels and men. An hour's fight would cover the sea with this flaming oil, and give it the appearance of a sheet of fire. The Saracen fleets were repeatedly destroyed by it, and their most valiant warriors, whom the near aspect of death had never daunted, recoiled from the terrors and the tortures of this liquid fire, which crept beneath their armour, and clung to every limb.

Constantine Pogonatus thus acquired a glory he had but little reason to anticipate: Moavia was not only compelled to raise the siege of Constantinople, but, at the close of his life, to purchase a thirty years' peace with the empire of the East, by a disgraceful tribute.

The last prince of the race of Heraclius, Justinian II., who succeeded his father, Constantine Pogonatus, in the month of September, 685, was of a character to increase the perils of the empire. He was only fifteen years old; his ferocity, kept alive by the influence of a eunuch and a monk, his two chief ministers and sole confidants, had all the activity of his time of life. He found enjoyment in the punishments he inflicted, and insisted on witnessing: the sufferings of others were to him a source of agreeable excitement, and his breast was inaccessible to pity for miseries which he had never felt nor feared. During the ten years from 685 to 695, the East was delivered up to the fury of a monster, who wanted neither talents nor courage, and who was well able to defend himself from the effects of the universal hatred which he at once deserved and defied. During the succeeding ten years, Justinian wandered an exile among the barbarous nations on the borders of the Euxine Sea. A revolution had hurled him from the throne; but his successor had, with most imprudent lenity, spared his life, and had only mutilated his face, as a means of preventing his reascending the throne. In the year 705, however, Justinian re-entered Constantinople at the head of an army composed of Bulgarian peasants and of Chozars, a people who lived on the borders of the Don, and was again proclaimed emperor. While he was in exile, the reins of government had been in the hands of two Augustuses, named Leontius

and Apsimar: they were dragged, loaded with chains, to the hippodrome; and Justinian, planting a foot on the neck of each, witnessed for an hour the games of the circus, thus treading under foot his victims before he consigned them over to execution. After his return he maintained himself on the throne for six years, during which his former cruelty was heightened by an implacable spirit of revenge. This tyrant condemned to the most horrible tortures not only individuals, but whole towns that had incurred his displeasure during his exile. At length, however, a new insurrection delivered the East from his power. He was massacred in the month of December, 711; and, his son and mother being put to death with him, the race of Heraclius became extinct.

The long period during which Justinian's tyranny provoked the revolutions which twice hurled him from the throne, was not remarkable for any calamities from without. The Bulgarians, a ferocious people of the Slavonian race, who had settled on the banks of the Danube, in a country which still bears their name, took no part in the civil wars of the Greeks, except to aid Justinian against his subjects. The Musulmans were too much engaged at home to think of attacking the empire. The Arabs, being unwilling to recognise the house of Moavia, a new khaliph, elected at Mecca, had thence extended his sway over Persia; so that each of the two eastern empires was too much occupied with its own troubles to enter on a war with its ancient rival. The Saracens were the first to recover the free disposal of their military force. In the reign of Soliman, (A. D. 715,) an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men was sent, under the command of Moslemah, brother of the khaliph, to effect the conquest of Constantinople, which it was declared Mahommed had promised to the faithful, and which the Musulmans regarded as essential to their salvation.

But, to meet this new danger, fortune raised to the throne of Constantinople a man endowed with decision of character, distinguished talents, and an enlightened reason: this was Leo III. or the Isaurian, who was crowned on the 25th of March, 717, and reigned till 741. His crown descended to his son and grandson. Brought up in obscurity amid the mountains of Asia Minor, among a people to whom the arts of populous cities were unknown, he had imbibed from his countrymen the primitive aversion of the Jews and Christians to idols and images, the worship of which

had already been for some centuries introduced into the church. His abhorrence of idolatry, founded both on religion and on philosophy, was strengthened by the reproaches which the Greeks continually received from their rivals in the East, who had an invincible hatred of images. The Persians, and subsequently the Musulmans, while they expressed their horror of men whom they saw worshipping the work of their own hands, had appealed against the practice of the Christians to the authority of their own sacred books, and reproached them with a gross violation of the second commandment; and, as they had at the same time overthrown the altars and dragged in the dirt those images to which was attributed a miraculous character; as they had successfully braved those thunders which, according to the priests, were prepared for their defence, they had inflicted on superstition the most formidable of all blows, those which affect, not the intellect, but the senses. A great zeal for reform was thus excited throughout the empire; a strong desire to return to a more pure religion succeeded the shameful traffic of superstition which had so long disgraced the clergy. Leo the Isaurian put himself at the head of this honourable turn of public feeling; and, for weapons to oppose Musulman fanaticism, had recourse to reason, philosophy, and the light of true Christianity. Happy if he had assailed superstition with no other forces; or if the attacks and plots of the monks had not forced him into measures of persecution, that dishonoured the cause they were intended to serve!

The defence of Constantinople, by Leo the Isaurian, was still more brilliant than that of Constantine Pogonatus at the former siege. Before he was well established on his throne, Moslemah, on the 15th of July, 717, had crossed the Hellespont at the straits of Abydos with his numerous army, and, unfurling in Europe, for the first time, the banner of the prophet, he assailed the walls on the side of the land, at the same time that a fleet of eighteen hundred sail attacked them from the sea. The fleet was entirely destroyed by the Greek fire; and, in the next campaign, a second met the same fate. The emperor succeeded in turning the swords of his enemies against each other, and an army of Bulgarians assisted in the repulse of the Musulmans. Moslemah was at last compelled to raise the siege on the 15th of August, 718, having sustained a loss so great as to deprive the Omniades of all power of renewing the attack on the empire. Constantine Copronymus, son of Leo III., obtained some victories over the

Musulmans at the beginning of his reign, but he marched to seek them on the banks of the Euphrates. Greece had ceased to fear them; and, during the whole of the eighth century, Asia Minor was completely subject to the successors of the Cæsars.

The attacks of the Musulmans on the West were, at first, crowned with extraordinary success. The conquest of Africa was effected, (A. D. 665—689,) by Akbah, lieutenant of the khaliph Moavia, and of his son Yezid. Having led his victorious army as far as those parts which are now under the dominion of the emperor of Morocco, he urged his horse into the waters of the Atlantic, just opposite the Canary Isles, and, brandishing his scimitar, exclaimed, "Great God! why is my progress checked by these waves? Fain would I publish, to the unexplored kingdoms of the west, that thou art the sole God, and that Mahomed is thy prophet; fain would I cut down with this sword those rebels who worship other gods than thee!" It was not, however, till after the second civil wars, from 692 to 698, that Carthage, the metropolis of Africa, was besieged by Hassan, governor of Egypt. The obstinate resistance of the Christians, their short-lived successes (during which, with the assistance of a Greek fleet, they retook some towns of which the Musulmans had made themselves masters,) so provoked the resentment of Hassan, that, on re-entering Carthage by storm, he gave up that beautiful city to the flames. The former rival of Rome was finally and utterly destroyed. A great number of the inhabitants were put to the sword; many escaped to the Greek fleet, which conveyed them to Constantinople during the exile of Justinian II.; many were scattered over the coasts of Sicily, Italy, and Spain. Those in whom attachment to their country prevailed over their love of their religion, suffered themselves to be transplanted to Cairoan, the new capital founded by the conquerors; and the ancient queen of Africa has never arisen from her ruins.

The Moors and the Berbers, as well as the Romans, opposed some resistance to the Musulmans. The historians of the latter, unchecked in their descriptions of battles with a people who had no traditions, lent them countless armies to enhance the glory of their own conquests, and have celebrated victories which were probably never obtained. But, whatever their resistance, the Moors were ultimately reduced to submission by Musa, Hassan's successor. Thirty thousand of their youth embraced Islamism in the same day, and were enrolled in the army: the whole na-

tion, already resembling the Bedouins in their customs, and born under a similar climate, adopted the language and name, as well as the religion, of the Arabs, and, at the present day, the Moors can with difficulty be distinguished from the Saracens.

Scarcely had the conquest of Africa been completed, in the year 709, when a Visigothic noble proffered his assistance to the lieutenant of the khaliphs, in introducing their troops into Spain. Rodrigo, who then ruled over Spain, was the twentieth of the Visigothic kings of Toledo, reckoning from Athanagild, who, in the year 554, had removed the seat of government to that city. We shall not trace the succession of these sovereigns, who are known to us only through the medium of short and imperfect chroniclers, or through the acts of the councils of Toledo. A long detail of assassinations, of domestic plots, of sons put to death by the order of their fathers, would leave only a confused impression of crimes and violence, associated with barbarous names which the memory could not long retain. The Arian creed, which had maintained its ground longer in Spain than in any other part of the West, was abandoned in 586 by Recared, who at the commencement of his reign professed the orthodox faith. From this period the spirit of intolerance which prevailed among the clergy seemed to exercise a constant influence over the national councils. All who differed from the dominant opinions were subject to persecution, and the dissent of sectarians and Jews was frequently punished with death. It was to be expected that those who carried tyranny even into the sanctuary of thought, would hardly endure the presence of a spirit of liberty in the civil government of the state: nevertheless, the Visigothic kings were not absolute; during the whole of their rule the throne was considered elective; and although on several occasions the son succeeded to the father, it was only when, with the consent of the nation, he had been associated in the government during his father's life.

This nation, however, consisted not of citizens, but of nobles, great landholders, and priests. From an early period the Visigoths had had nothing to fear from the opposition of enemies in the Peninsula; they retained their possessions on the other side of the Pyrennees,—Septimania, or Languedoc,—of which the Frankic kings had tried to deprive them. They subjugated the Suevi of Lusitania in 584, and in 623 drove the Greeks from the towns which they yet occupied on their coasts. From that time they neglected those military exercises which seemed objectless and

needless. The victors, mixing with the far more numerous but vanquished Romans, adopted their language; or rather, from the mingling of Teutonic words and phrases with the provincial Latin first arose that Romanz language afterwards called Spanish. About the middle of the seventh century the Roman laws were abolished, and the whole of the kingdom governed according to the Visigothic code: this, it is true, was scarcely more than an abridgment of the code of Theodosius. The distinction between the two races was, therefore, more completely effaced in Spain than any other part of the West. The appellation Gothic was assigned to the whole nation, though Roman manners prevailed, and luxury, effeminacy, and the love of pleasure had obtained universal dominion. The landholders were numerous and armed, but they had lost their warlike habits and tastes; and in showing themselves disposed to have recourse to their national enemies to avenge their wrongs, rather than to their own swords, they proved that their barbarian opinions and sentiments were already exchanged for those of the empire.

Count Julian, a Gothic noble, governor of Ceuta in Africa, and of a portion of Spain on the other side the Straits, had received an inexpressible injury. It is related—but the statement rests for authority much more on a Spanish romance than upon any authentic chronicles—that Julian's daughter Cava was carried off by king Rodrigo, and that, to revenge this outrage, he hesitated not to sacrifice both his country and his religion. It is known, also (and with a higher degree of certainty,) that Witiza, the predecessor of Rodrigo, had left two sons. Now, although the nation had a right to remove them from the throne by a new election, yet, even in elective monarchies, the sons of kings consider themselves endowed with inalienable rights; and it is a received doctrine among the supporters of legitimacy, that a dethroned monarch is justified in appealing to the enemies of his country, if by this means he shall be enabled to recover any portion of the power of his ancestors. Count Julian, the sons of Witiza, and their uncle Oppas, archbishop of Toledo, secretly despatched a messenger to Musa, who then governed Africa for the khaliph, to request the assistance of a Musulman army to replace the legitimate princes on the throne.

A daring Saracen commander, named Tarik, was the first to pass the Straits, in the month of July, 710, with five hundred soldiers. The place where he disembarked still bears the name

of Tarifa, and the castle of Julian, which was opened to receive him, he called Algesiras, (the Green Isle.) It was quickly filled with Christians, who flocked to his standard. In the following April, Tarik landed again in Spain, with five thousand soldiers, at Gibraltar, properly *Gebel al Tarik*, (the mountain of Tarik.) Rodrigo despatched troops with orders to drive the Musulmans into the sea; but their commander was, himself, put to the rout. The king of the Visigoths then assembled his whole army, which is said to have been from ninety to a hundred thousand strong; but Tarik, on his side, had been receiving daily re-enforcements. Twelve thousand Musulmans had already joined his standard; a multitude of African Moors, who had proved the valour of the Saracens, hastened hither to take part in their successes; even the number of Christians, who, dissatisfied with the government, or seduced by the nobles, had taken up arms against their religion and their country, was very considerable. The armies met on the Guadalete, near Xeres. The Arab cavalry and light infantry, as usual, fatigued the more heavily armed troops of the Goths with long skirmishes. The engagement thus continued for seven days, from the 19th to the 26th of July. Rodrigo commanded his army in person; but the last successor of Alaric appeared at the head of his soldiers, bearing on his head a crown of pearls, clothed in a flowing robe of gold and silk, and reclining in a car of ivory drawn by two white mules. The troops resembled their chief: it is, therefore, not very surprising, that their conduct corresponded to their dress. On the fourth day of the battle, the archbishop of Toledo and the two sons of Witiza, whose treachery had not been suspected, went over to the enemy with their partisans: from that moment the battle was decided, and the remaining three days were little else than a disastrous rout, fatal to the Gothic nation, as well as to nearly all the combatants. Almost all the towns subsequently attacked by detached parties opened their gates. Toledo, by capitulating, secured protection to its ancient religion; the lesser towns followed this example; and, in the first year of the invasion, Tarik had pushed his victorious course to the very shores of the Asturias. In the two following years, Musa, who had arrived with a fresh army from Africa, attacked successively Seville, Merida, and the other cities which had at first refused to surrender. Before the end of the year 713, the whole of Spain was conquered; for the resistance of a few petty chiefs, who had retreated to in-

accessible fastnesses in the mountains, was too indignant to attract the notice of the Musulmans. By these very chiefs, however, and their descendants, in whom poverty and danger revived those virtues which luxury had destroyed, the country was reconquered; but that which was wrested from them in three years, it required eight centuries to regain. Scarcely was Spain reduced, when, in 714, its conqueror Musa was made to experience the ingratitude of despotic courts. He was arrested at the head of his army by a messenger from the caliph Valid, who commanded him to hasten to Damascus, there to render an account for the abuse of power of which he was said to have been guilty.

The geographical position of France now made it her special duty and interest to resist the fearful progress of the Musulman arms. We have seen, in another chapter, that, just at this period, Pepin of Heristal, duke of the Austrasian Franks, died, (December 16, 714,) after having, by the assistance of the great nobles, triumphed over the popular party of the Neustrians and their mayor of the palace, and had reduced the voluptuous and imbecile descendant of Clovis to a kind of captivity. The legitimate sons of Pepin died before him; and there is reason to believe that one of them, Grimoald, was killed by his natural brother Charles, afterwards surnamed le Martel, *i. e.* the Hammer. This Charles, by whose valour France was hereafter to be saved, was then a prisoner of Plectrude, the widow of Pepin, one of whose sons, a child of about six years of age, had been designed to be mayor of the palace to the *fainéant* king Dagobert III., then about thirteen; so that, to the disgrace of the free men by whom they were to be obeyed, a boy king, in conjunction with an infant prime minister, was to govern the first monarchy of the West. The hatred of the Neustrians for the Austrasians had doubled during the oppressive administration of Pepin; the authority of the Franks was no longer recognised by the greater part of Germany. The Frieslanders made yearly attacks on the Austrasians. Aquitaine, Provence, and Burgundy, governed by dukes or counts, had separated themselves entirely from the monarchy. At length a civil war broke out in the very army that Pepin had left at his death to his widow Plectrude: some remained faithful to her, others wished to release Charles from the prison in which he was confined at Cologne. No idea of the general interest, of honour, of the defence of Christendom,

seemed to form a bond of union among the people of the West; nor did Zama, the khaliph's new lieutenant, find any difficulty in crossing the Pyrennees, or in seizing upon Narbonne and all that part of Gaul that had remained attached to the Visigothic monarchy.

The dukes of the southern provinces of Gaul soon began to negotiate and to submit. Eudes, duke of Aquitaine, after sustaining a siege in Toulouse, his capital, resolved to seek the alliance of Munuza, the Saracen commander of Septimania and Catalonia, and to give him his daughter in marriage. Ambiza, the new governor of Spain, making his way into Burgundy, advanced, in 725, as far as Autun, with but little difficulty. Abderrahman, whom the khaliph Hashem afterwards sent to Corduba, as governor of Spain, crossed the Pyrennees in 732, entered Gaul by Gascony, carried Bordeaux by assault and delivered it up to pillage, crossed the Dordogne, defeated the duke of Aquitaine in two battles, and ravaged Périgord, Saintonge, Angoumois, and Poitou. Other bands of Musulmans had made their way into Provence; and duke Mauronte, as well as many other nobles between the Rhone and the Alps, had voluntarily submitted to the khaliphs. It appeared impossible for France to avoid subjugation: with her, all Europe would probably have fallen; for there was no people in the rear of the Franks in a condition for war, no other Christian people, none other that had made any progress toward civilization; none, in short, which, either by its valour, its policy, its means of defence, or the number of its troops, could indulge any hope of victory if the Franks were conquered.

But Charles Martel, whom his partisans had liberated, in 715, from the hands of Plectrude and from his captivity at Cologne, had employed all the intervening time in remodelling the monarchy, and in raising a new army; in attaching it to himself; in distributing amongst the soldiers the only riches he found still untouched, those of the clergy; in training them to war, by leading them successively against the Frieslanders, the Saxons, the Aquitanians, and all the tribes which had severed themselves from the body of the state. He had reduced the Neustrians to subjection, and had gained the entire affection of the Austrasians. An absolute barbarian himself, and reigning in a country from which ancient civilization seemed completely rooted out, the whole of his life was passed in the camp. In the midst of these

contests, his astonishment, but not fear, was excited by the arrival of his old enemy Eudes, the duke of Aquitaine, accompanied by a small number of Aquitanian fugitives, declaring that he had nothing left of the territory or the army with which he had hitherto resisted him; that an enemy more powerful than either of them had despoiled him of every thing. Charles Martel consulted his Franks, and they all declared themselves willing to undertake the defence of their former enemy, who now appealed to their generosity, against the Saracens. He passed the Loire in the month of October, 732, met Abderrahman on the plain of Poitiers, and, after seven days' skirmishing, engaged in that fearful battle which was to decide the fate of Europe. Isidore, bishop of Beja, in Portugal, an author nearly contemporary, is the only one who devotes more than two lines to this memorable event, which occurred at a time when no one wrote. "The Franks," says he, "were planted like an immoveable buttress, like a wall of ice, against which the light-armed Arabs dashed themselves to pieces without making any impression. The Musulmans advanced and retired with great rapidity; but they were mowed down by the swords of the Germans. Abderrahman himself fell under their blows. Mean while, night began to fall, and the Franks lifted up their arms, as if to petition their leaders for rest. They wished to reserve themselves for the next day's fight, for they saw the distant country covered with Saracen tents. But when, on the following morning, they formed for battle, they perceived that the tents were empty, and that the Saracens, terrified by the dreadful loss they had sustained, had retreated in the middle of the night, and were already far on their way." Although the Musulman army effected its retreat into Spain without farther check, this great battle was decisive; and Europe, at this day, owes its existence, its religion, and its liberty, to the victory gained over the Saracens before Poitiers, by Charles, the Hammer, which shattered the Saracen force.

CHAPTER XVI.

Absence of historical Documents.—Military Clergy.—Charles le Martel.—His numerous Wars and Victories.—Germanic Character of his Army and Government.—Thierry IV.—His Death.—Charles's Sovereignty.—His Death.—Hostility of the Clergy to Charles.—Vision of St. Eucherius.—Karloman.—His Abdication.—Pepin.—His Deference for the Church.—First Admission of Bishops to the National Assemblies.—Its Effect on the Character of those Meetings.—Childeric III.—His Deposition.—Pepin proclaimed King.—End of the Merovingian Dynasty.—Reign of Pepin.—Annexation of Aquitaine, Burgundy, Provence, etc. to France.—State of Italy.—Astolfo, King of the Lombards.—Pope Stephen II.—His Suit to Pepin for Assistance.—Enthusiasm of the Franks.—Invasion of Italy.—Defeat of Astolfo.—Grant made to the See of Rome by Pepin.—Power of the Clergy.—Death of Pepin.—Extraordinary Character of his Son and Nephew, Charles the Great.—Joint Succession of Charles and Karloman.—Death of Karloman.—Vices of Charles.—Eginhard.—His Account of Charlemagne's Learning and Accomplishments.—Alcuin.—Extent of the Frankic Empire.—State of the Gaulish and of the Frankic Population.—Superiority of the Germanic Portion.—Border Nations.—Lombards.—Didier.—Marriage and Repudiation of his Daughter Desideria by Charles.—War with Lombardy.—Invasion of Italy.—Siege and Surrender of Pavia.—Imprisonment of Didier.—Flight of his Son Adelhgis.—Union of the Crown of Lombardy with that of France.—War with the Saxons.—Their Numbers and Character.—Wedekind.—His obstinate Resistance.—Victory of Buchholz.—Massacre of the Saxon Prisoners.—Submission of Wedekind.—Final Subjugation of the Saxons.—A. D. 714—800.

AFTER having laid before our readers the origin, the early progress, and the rapid conquests, of a new empire and a new religion, which, arising in the burning regions of the south, threatened to overflow the world, we are led by these very victories to turn our attention to that people and that empire of Europe which arrested the progress of the invading torrent; which preserved and bequeathed to us the laws, the independence, the religion, and the language of the Latin and the German world.

Charles Martel, the natural son and successor of Pepin of Herstal, during a reign of twenty-seven years, (A. D. 714—741,) appears to our eyes shrouded by a dense cloud; yet from this cloud we occasionally see the flash of the lightning and hear the roar of the thunder. The West had never been so absolutely without an historian, as during the first half of the eighth century; never had barbarism been so complete, or monarch, nobles, and

people so utterly indifferent to fame, so careless of transmitting any recollections of their deeds to posterity.

The sole record we possess of this long period is found in chronicles, the author of which has rigidly abstained from devoting more than three lines to each year. Even the clergy at this time were purely military. The new bishops, upon whom Charles Martel bestowed the richest benefices of Gaul, did not lay down the sword when they assumed the crosier; the greater number of them knew not how to read, and had not in their whole chapter a single person who could write. Hence the catalogues of the bishops of France, during the seventh and eighth centuries, exhibit only a long blank. If Charles murdered his brother Grimoald, the motive was not ambition, but a desire of avenging the insult offered to his mother Alpaïde: the tie between two brothers, sons of two rival mothers, could not be very strong; and the guilty violence of Charles would do him no dishonour, at least in the eyes of his countrymen. The bravery, the promptitude, and the talents of Charles, the "Martel" (hammer) that crushed the enemies of France, inspired his companions in arms with equal gratitude and admiration. In him they saw the hero who had repulsed the Frieslanders; who in the great battle of Vincy, on the 21st of March, 717, had compelled the Neustrians once more to acknowledge the supremacy of the Austrasians; who conquered in succession the Saxons, the Bavarians, the Allemans, the Aquitanians, the Burgundians, and the Provençals, before he achieved that grand victory over the Saracens which saved Europe from their yoke. We have no details of these campaigns, in which Charles's success was uninterrupted; we only see that his enemies, or rather that the dukes, formerly subject to France and now struggling to throw off their allegiance, gave him not a moment's repose. The year 740 is the only one not marked by a battle; and the annalists record this fact with as much astonishment as the Romans were wont to mention those in which they closed the temple of Janus. Before Charles's time Gaul had begun to regain somewhat of the character impressed on her by Roman power and Roman civilization. The Franks, the Visigoths, the Burgundians, established in Aquitaine, in Septimania, in Burgundy, and Provence, suffered the language and the customs of their forefathers to fall into disuse and oblivion, and adopted those of the Latins. Even the Franks of Neustria had yielded to the influence of time, of indolence, and of the examples universally pre-

valent around them. The victories of Charles Martel restored to France a purely Germanic government. The army was once more in possession of undisputed sovereignty, and this army was levied exclusively in countries speaking the Teutonic languages. Its assemblies, in the months of March and October, for the purpose of deliberating and deciding on national business, were more frequent and regular. Its spirit of hostility to all who used the Latin tongue was more marked. Once more, it was distinct from the mass of the people; once more, as in the early times of the first dynasty, it remained imbodyed in cantonments, instead of dispersing itself through the provinces, where the soldier might resume domestic habits, and unite the cultivation of the soil to the practice of arms.

Charles had permitted Chilperic II., nominal sovereign of the Neustrians from the year 715 to 720, to retain the title of king. He had appointed Thierry IV. to succeed him, (A. D. 720—737;) and he left him, without distrust or dread, to the full enjoyment of the pomps and pleasures of royalty; to feasts and mistresses, the theatre and the chase: in a word, to all that these princes required to convince them that they were of a race distinct from common men, and that those who incurred the toils and the perils of war, who took upon themselves the irksome business of thought and of action, were but the obsequious menials who eased them of fatigue. It has sometimes been affirmed, and on the authority of a chronicle otherwise exact and veracious, that the *fainéant* kings were prisoners in the palace of Maumaques, on the Oise. We are, however, in possession of charters of Thierry IV. dated from Soissons, Coblenz, Metz, Heristal, Gondreville, and a great many other palaces. He inhabited them all in turn, in perfect liberty, nor did it ever occur to him to suspect that he did not govern. At his death, however, Charles thought he might safely dispense with a useless pageant: he appointed no successor.

We know the names neither of the ministers, the generals, nor the companions in arms of Charles; unless, indeed, we choose to adopt as authority the tales and songs of chivalry, and to recognise the existence of those *Preux*, the paladins of Charlemagne; Roland and Reinhold, (Rinaldo,) Brandimart, Ogier the Dane, and all the illustrious heroes of romance. The wars of the Saracens, in which they figure, did, in fact, extend through the whole reign of Charles Martel; they were not terminated by the

battle of Poitiers. Between the years 733 and 737, the Musulmans got possession of Avignon; they repelled the attacks of Charles Martel in Septimania; and subjugated nearly the whole of Provence. In 739 they were driven out, but only to reconquer it; and their civil wars in Spain afforded the sole check to their progress in Gaul. These successive invasions give some colour of reality to the long struggles celebrated by Ariosto and his precursors, in which the more illustrious name of Charles the Great has been substituted for that of his grandfather. The time of the disastrous battle of Roncevalles, in which Roland perished after a long career of military glory, (A. D. 778, the tenth year of Charlemagne's reign,) favours this supposition.

Charles died on the 21st of October, 741, leaving three sons by three different mothers: Pepin and Karloman, between whom he divided the vast dominions he had conquered in Gaul and Germany; and Grifon, much younger than his brothers, to whom he bequeathed only an estate sufficient for the maintenance of his rank. The portion of the latter, small as it was, was not respected: the two princes stripped Grifon; who, sometimes received into favour, and sometimes goaded to fresh rebellion, after having sought refuge with all the enemies of his family in turn, was at length assassinated on the banks of the Arche in Savoy. It might be presumed, that, the hero who had saved the church of Gaul from the Musulman yoke must be dear to the clergy: but he had imagined that for a cause so eminently religious he might demand the aid of the professors of religion. Pressed at the same time by the pagans of Germany and the Musulmans of Spain, he had subjected the revenues of convents and churches to the payment of a ninth or tenth, with the aid of which he had been enabled to support his army. Never did the clergy forgive him this application of a portion of church property. "It is because prince Charles," says the council of Kiersi to one of his descendants, "was the first of all the kings and princes of the Franks who separated and dismembered the goods of the church, it is for that sole cause that he is eternally damned. We know, indeed, that St. Eucherius, bishop of Orleans, being in prayer, was carried up to the world of spirits, and that, among the things which the Lord showed unto him, he beheld Charles tormented in the lowest depths of hell. The angel who conducted him, being interrogated on this matter, answered him, that, in the judgment to come, the soul and the body

of him who has taken or has divided the goods of the church, shall be delivered over, even before the end of the world, to eternal torments, by the sentence of the saints who shall sit, together with the Lord, to judge him. This act of sacrilege shall add to his own sins the accumulated sins of all those who thought that they had purchased their redemption by giving, for the love of God, their goods to holy places, to the lights of divine worship, and to the alms of the servants of Christ.

What an infallible council then wrote to Louis, the Germanic priests and monks had never ceased proclaiming from the pulpit during the whole preceding century. They had struck terror into the imagination of every Carlovingian by their declarations of the certain damnation of the founder of their line. Far from exciting the disgust and indignation of his descendants by this language, they had heightened their superstitious terrors; and we may date from this period a revolution in the government of France, the subjection of the sword to the crosier, and the establishment of the supremacy of the clergy.

Of the two sons of Charles, Karloman, who had received Austrasia and Germany as his portion, seemed to have his mind most troubled by these superstitious fears. After a reign of six years, (A. D. 741—747,) during which his victories over the Bavarians and the Allemans gained him some renown, though sullied by the cruelty of the punishments he inflicted, and by some suspicion of treachery, Karloman suddenly took the resolution of renouncing the world, and of retiring to a convent which he had founded on Mount Soracte, near Rome; and as, even there, he found himself surrounded by too much pomp, and waited upon with too much respect, he escaped, and took refuge in the Benedictine convent on Monte Cassino. If we may give credence to the legend, he there submitted to the most abject humiliations, and so perfectly succeeded in concealing his rank, that he was employed to keep the sheep belonging to the convent, or to assist in the lowest drudgery of the kitchen.

Pepin, surnamed the Short, the younger of the two brothers, was not inspired by a religious zeal so entirely detached from the things of this world. When Karloman abdicated the sovereignty, he recommended his children to his brother's care and protection. Pepin hastened to have them ordained, in order, as he said, to secure to them celestial crowns, more lasting than those perishable glories which their father had bequeathed them, and

which he took to himself. At the same time, he showed a degree of deference for the clergy, till then without example. He not only enriched them with immense donations; he submitted the whole of his political affairs and conduct to their judgment, and seemed to act only under their direction. He was the first who allotted to the bishops a seat in the assemblies of the nation; and, by that single act, he occasioned the disuse of the German or Frankic tongue, in which the deliberations had hitherto been carried on, in favour of the Latin: a language which the majority of the Franks did not understand, was henceforth the language of these meetings. Nor was this all. The bishops soon brought before the assemblies of the Champs de Mars theological questions still more unintelligible than the tongue in which they were discussed. The brave but ignorant warriors, full of reverence for the prelates, and of zeal for religion, listened, uncomplainingly, to the long harangues which now formed the exclusive business of the sittings, and of which they understood not a single word. The tediousness and the insignificance of the part they played, at length drove them from these assemblies; and hence arose that important revolution which, under the Carolingian dynasty, transformed military reviews into episcopal synods. Pepin and his son Charlemagne, however, knew perfectly well how to find their soldiers when they wanted them, by convoking the fields of March or of May in the enemy's country. At a subsequent period the bishops succeeded in obtaining the sole voice in these meetings.

One of the first acts of the clergy, now become omnipotent, was to introduce into the Frankic legislation such of the Mosaic laws, found in the books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus, as appeared to them to afford materials for the confirmation of their power. This is the main drift of the Capitularies of Pepin, in which it is easy to trace the exclusive work of priests. They afterwards showed their gratitude to their patron by ridding him of a rival who might have become dangerous. In 742, Pepin thought himself obliged to give to Neustria a new Merovingian king, whom he called Childeric III. He had taken him out of some convent; and his choice had probably been determined by his extreme youth. By this mark of respect for the ancient race, he had endeavoured to allay the discontents and the resentments of the Franks of the south, who reluctantly submitted to the domination of the Austrasians and of a new army of Germanic

soldiers. When, however, Childeric had attained the age of reason, and might possibly have asserted his claim to some portion of that royal authority of which he had hitherto enjoyed only the trappings, Pepin began to be still more disquieted by fears of those popular passions which he had sought to propitiate, but to which, as it now appeared to him, he had but given a leader. Opposing one hereditary right only by another, he felt that he was not the choice of the nation. He determined to be at least the choice of the priests.

He intrusted his chaplain and the bishop of Würzburg with a secret negotiation with Rome, and he obtained from pope Zacharias the answer which he had himself suggested. It was proclaimed in these terms:—"That it was more expedient that he should be king who really exercised the royal power." And, in fact, on the first Sunday of March, A. D. 752, Pepin caused himself to be raised on a shield at Soissons, and proclaimed king of the Franks; after which he was anointed by the bishops with a mysterious oil which placed him under the immediate protection of the Deity. Childeric III. submitted without resistance, and was shut up in a convent at St. Omer. His son, whose birth had probably given some alarm to Pepin, was also put out of the way.

The profound obscurity which hangs over the history of the latter reigns of the Merovingian line is not dissipated immediately after the accession of the new dynasty. The character of king Pepin is completely unknown to us. We have no means of judging whether his profound deference for the priesthood was the effect of policy or of superstition; yet this is the only remarkable feature of his character of which we have any record. We have not the slightest idea either of his habits, his talents, or of the degree of instruction which he could have acquired; and, during a reign of sixteen years from the time of his coronation, (A. D. 752—768,) we gain no farther information concerning him.

Yet the coronation of Pepin must be regarded as the final and completing act of the revolution which placed the south of Europe under Germanic ascendancy, and renewed the rigorous organization which the conquerors of France had brought from the North. The other Pepin, his grandfather, who conquered the Neustrians and the freemen with the aid of a portion of the great nobles, while he augmented his own power, had disorganized the empire. All the dukes, his allies, had looked to the

power of shaking off their yoke as the first fruit of victory. The domination of the Franks had ceased to be recognised by Germany and by southern Gaul; and, during seventy years, the Carolingians were involved in a struggle with their former allies, the object of which was to strip them of the prerogatives for which they had fought side by side. Pepin the Short, in assuming the title of king, instantly asserted his claim to the same supremacy which had been enjoyed by the descendants of Clovis; and, so great is the power of names over men, that the pretensions he put forth to a predominance over the independent princes began to be recognised as just. A part of the dukes of Germany acknowledged his supremacy. Odilo, duke of Bavaria, demanded his sister in marriage, and promised to march again under the Frankic banner. The whole north of Gaul obeyed. The submission of the south was the fruit of a conquest which occupied nearly the entire reign of Pepin.

One of the independent dukes, Guaifer, ruled over the whole country lying between the Loire and the Pyrennees. This was the ancient kingdom of Aquitaine, which now bore no higher title than that of dukedom. It was the same country which Clovis had endeavoured to wrest from the Visigoths; and Pepin, like Clovis, sought in religion a pretext for wresting it from his sovereign, and for inducing the Franks to second his projects. He accused Guaifer of having robbed the churches of a part of their wealth; cited him to make instant restitution of them; and, on his refusing, entered Aquitaine. The war lasted eight years, (A. D. 760—768:) it was followed up with intense exasperation, but was at length terminated by the death of Guaifer, the entire ruin of his family, and the union of Aquitaine with the crown of France.

Pepin had profited by the dissensions of the Saracens in Spain, to recover Septimania from them. He had taken Narbonne in 759, and had for the first time united Languedoc, as far as the eastern Pyrennees, to the Frankic monarchy. Burgundy and Provence, overrun by his armies, no longer opposed any resistance. The dukes of those provinces had submitted to the royal authority, without offering battle; and, at the conclusion of his reign, there remained no portion of Gaul which was not subject to the monarchy.

Even Italy had once more experienced the bravery of the Franks and the power of their kings. That country, divided for two centuries between the exarchs of Ravenna and the Lombard

kings, had just undergone a revolution. Astolfo, king of the Lombards, had conquered Ravenna and the towns subject to the Greek emperors along the Adriatic, in the year 752: from that time this province was called Romagna, as being the only one which had remained subject to the Roman empire. The exarchate was abolished, and king Astolfo began to turn his arms against the other small provinces which the Greeks still possessed in Italy, and, especially the dukedom of Rome. The pope was the first citizen of this duchy; and, though he always acknowledged the sovereignty of the Greek empire, he exercised throughout the province a power rendered the more extensive by the attachment of the Italians to the worship of images, and their consequent hatred of the domination of the iconoclast emperors. Stephen II., who then occupied the pontifical chair, instead of imploring the aid of Constantine Copronymus, applied to the king of the Franks, and conjured him to protect the apostle St. Peter, and the flock more immediately committed to his care. He even repaired to France in person, in 753, to solicit assistance. He excited a degree of enthusiasm which he had not expected; for, while he presented himself as a suppliant, clothed in sackcloth and ashes, he found himself considered as a messenger of the divinity, or rather as a divinity himself, whose orders were to be implicitly obeyed. The Franks, with one accord, declared themselves ready to sacrifice their property and their lives for his advantage. Pepin asked fresh consecration at his hands, and implored him to anoint his wife and children with the same mysterious oil. In return, he offered to abandon for ever the care of his kingdom, and to devote the whole remainder of his life to warring for the glory of God and of his vicar upon earth.

The pope dexterously took advantage of a state of popular excitement which he had not anticipated. He immediately shifted his ground, and required for himself, or rather for the apostle Peter from whom he produced a letter addressed to the king of the Franks, the succour which he had at first asked for the Roman republic or the Greek empire. Of his own authority he granted to Pepin and his two sons the title of Patrician; a title which was then appropriated to the lieutenant of that very Greek empire to which the pontiff himself had hitherto been subject.

He led Pepin and the army of the Franks into Italy; and after Astolfo had been conquered, he obtained from the generosity of the Frankic king the donation, made in favour of St. Peter,

either of the provinces themselves which had hitherto belonged to the Greeks, or of certain rights over those provinces, which were never very accurately defined, or very clearly understood, either by the donor or the receiver; but which, from their very vagueness and confusion, gave rise to the pretensions of the court of Rome over the sovereignty of a part of Italy.

Pepin reigned eleven years as mayor of the palace, and sixteen as king. His father had been the representative of a sovereign army; Pepin constituted himself the representative of a sovereign clergy; but both, by their rare talents, by their energy of will, by their great personal glory, had succeeded in completely predominating over the puissant body in whose name they acted. All that we know of the laws, of the civil acts, of the military achievements, of Pepin, seem to have been calculated to found and to consolidate this sovereignty of the clergy. Nevertheless, so long as he lived, he alone profited by a power which he had laboured to transmit; and when, on the 24th of September, 768, he died, he left behind him a son greater than himself, who, during nearly half a century, continued to rule and to protect that clergy whose authority and influence Pepin had substituted for that of the army. It was not till the reign of his grandson that all the consequences of the revolution he had effected in the monarchy could be estimated.

After having so long directed our attention alternately to sovereigns enervated by luxury and sloth, and by all the vices of courts; or to captains of barbarians, whose energy was chiefly manifested in acts of ferocity; after having turned with equal repugnance from the crimes of the Roman emperors and the crimes of the Frankic kings, we come at length to a great and noble character,—a man who unites the talents of the warrior, the genius of the legislator, and the virtues of the private citizen; a man who, born in the midst of barbarism, encompassed with the thickest darkness by the prevailing ignorance of his age, pours around him a stream of light and of glory; a man who gave a new impulse to civilization, and sensibly advanced the condition of the human race, which had so long been retrograding; who created, after ages had been passed in destroying; and who, though much better known than those who came two centuries before or two centuries after him, still inspires us with regret that we know not more of him. The entire reign of Charlemagne, from the year 768 to the year 814, is one of the most

important periods of modern history. Charlemagne, claimed by the church as a saint; by the French as the greatest of their kings; by the Germans as their countryman; by the Italians as their emperor; may be regarded as in some sort the fountain of all modern history. It is to him that we must always refer, in order to understand thoroughly our present condition and institutions.

It was not immediately that Charlemagne manifested all the greatness of his genius and of his character. Compelled to educate himself, to re-create for his own use the whole world of morals and of politics, some time was necessary for him to find his way out of the beaten track; to conceive what he owed to himself and to his subjects; to appeal to any other rule or standard of action than those low personal interests which had been the sole guides of his predecessors. He did not succeed alone to his father; at the moment of his death Pepin had divided the monarchy between his two sons. To Charles, who was the elder, and who had then attained the age of twenty-six, he bequeathed the western part of his dominions, from Friesland to the Bay of Biscay; to Karloman, the younger, he gave the east, from Swabia to the sea of Marseilles. The two brothers did not long remain on terms of amity. If Karloman had lived, war would, in all probability, have broken out between them at no distant period: he died in the third year of his reign, A. D. 771. Charles, with a rapacity and injustice which could not have been surpassed by any of his predecessors, stripped the widow and children of his brother of their inheritance, forced them to flee into Italy, nor is his name free from the stain of even darker suspicions as to their fate.

In his domestic manners, Charles, too, began by incurring reproach, from which, indeed, he was not wholly free to the end of his life. It was not only on account of his numerous mistresses, and the scandal which he thus caused, both to his people and to his daughters, who were brought up in the palace inhabited by his concubines, that he deserved censure. In his marriages and divorces he obeyed no other law than his own caprice; he seemed insensible to the suffering of the unfortunate women whom he repudiated under the slightest pretext, and left a prey to regret and humiliation.

But singular strength, both of soul and of intellect, are required to enable a man to raise himself to the comprehension and practice of true and severe morality, when every seductive influence sur-

rounds him, every example tends to corrupt him; when even the guides and guardians of his conscience offer him the treacherous resource of compensations, and assure him that all his sins may be absolved by alms and donations bestowed on monks and on churches. We owe it to Charles to reckon every step he set *against* the torrent, and to repress all surprise if its impetuosity occasionally hurried him along with it.

It is not known whether Pepin, who was entirely illiterate himself, had endeavoured to procure for his son the advantages of a liberal education; or whether Charlemagne began, as well as completed, by his own unaided will and energy, those studies which enlightened his mind and contributed largely to his moral greatness. Eginhard, his friend and secretary, has left us some most curious and valuable details respecting the instruction he acquired.

“Charles’s eloquence,” says he, “was abundant: he expressed with great facility whatever he desired; and, not contenting himself with his mother tongue, he had taken the trouble to learn those of foreign lands. He had so well learned Latin, that he could discourse in publick in that language almost as easily as in his own. He understood Greek better than he was able to employ it.” It is worthy of remark, that Eginhard does not tell us whether Charlemagne understood or could speak that *vatois* of the lower classes, called Roman, which then began to be formed in Gaul, and which gave birth to the French language; his native tongue was, of course, German. “Charles,” continues Eginhard, “had so much eloquence and fluency of speech, that he might almost be charged with abusing this gift. He had carefully studied the liberal arts; he had a great respect for the teachers of them, and heaped honours upon them. He had learned grammar of deacon Peter of Pisa, who gave him lessons in his old age. In his other studies he had, as preceptor, Albinus, surnamed Alcuin, a deacon from Britain, but of Saxon race; a man learned in every sort of knowledge. With him he devoted a great deal of time and labour to the learning of rhetoric, dialectics, and, more especially, astronomy. He also learned the art of calculating, or arithmetic; and applied himself with great assiduity to ascertain the courses of the stars. He likewise exercised himself in writing; and commonly kept under his pillow, tablets and small books, so that when he had any moments to spare, he might accustom his hand to form letters: but he succeeded ill in this work, which was taken up too late and unseasonably.”

It is so contrary to all our usages to attain to so great a proficiency in language and in science without the power of writing, that people have tried to invent some other explanation for the words of this text, clear as it is; and have conjectured that calligraphy, and not mere writing, is meant. This arises from their having lost sight of the direction which instruction took in barbarous ages. With few books, and a still greater scarcity of paper, writing was a great and costly luxury; lessons were almost all orally given, nor was writing ever used as a mere instrument of study. Charles, it is true, was not constrained to economize parchment; but his masters could never have required the habit, with their other pupils, of making writing the basis of instruction; so that they would not have known how to combine their lessons with the extracts, dictations, and other written exercises now in use: they required of their scholars no notes nor compositions, and they inscribed their precepts not on tablets, but on the memory. Writing was a useful art, and not a branch of science; and a man of active mind found it much more advantageous to employ secretaries. Although, therefore, Charles could not write, we may place him, without hesitation, among the most learned sovereigns that ever sat upon a throne.

The great man that, at the period we are now contemplating, wielded the sceptre of France with undivided sway, had at his disposal the whole force of one of the most powerful monarchies the world ever beheld. The whole of Gaul was now subject to the Franks, as far as the Pyrennees, the Mediterranean, and the Italian Alps. Helvetia, Rhætia, and Swabia, were annexed to it; and its northern frontier extended far beyond the Rhine, to the plains of Lower Germany, where the Franks bordered on the Saxons. The population of this vast empire was very unequally distributed. Throughout the south of Gaul it was still numerous, but disarmed: the inhabitants of Aquitaine, Provence, and Burgundy were also often designated by the name of Romans; their language, out of which arose the modern French, was not understood by their conquerors; they were always regarded with distrust, were not incorporated in the armies, nor appointed to any places of trust or influence. In the centre of Gaul, though occupied by two nations instead of one—the Franks and the Romans, the former of whom had not learned the language of the latter,—the population was more thinly scattered; the greater number of husbandmen were reduced to a state of

slavery; the nobles occupied whole provinces, which they administered like vast farms; and freemen, dispersed with their small hereditary properties around the borders of a great estate, felt themselves in a state of oppression which often drove them to renounce their allodia, to abandon their freehold property, and submit themselves in voluntary allegiance to some one of their powerful neighbours, who, in return, engaged to afford them protection. But, in the provinces situated on the banks of the Rhine, which have preserved to this day the use of the German language, the Teutonic race were sole masters. There were few slaves, and, consequently, few great lords; the population mainly consisted of freemen, who cultivated their own allodia; and leudes, or feudatory vassals, who had bound themselves in military service to their lords, and held themselves constantly armed and prepared to perform it.

It was in these provinces, of which Aix-la-Chapelle, or, in their own language, Aachen, was, in some sort, the metropolis, that the whole nerve and vigour of the Frankic nation resided. There it was that Charlemagne assembled his armies; there he convoked his states-general. It was with the aid of this Germanic portion of his subjects alone that he ruled the rest of his monarchy, and that he attempted conquests beyond its limits.

Charles's neighbours were not powerful enough to inspire him with much anxiety. To the west, the sea bounded his territory; and, beyond it, the island of Britain, divided among the petty kings of the Saxon heptarchy, and in a state of absolute barbarism, exercised no influence, and could awaken no fears. To the south, Spain had detached itself, in the year 755, from the great empire of the khaliphs. A descendant of the Ommiades, Abderrahman, had founded the kingdom of Corduba, which the sovereign of Damascus regarded as a revolted province. The Saracens had ceased to be formidable; and, in the Asturias, Navarre, and Arragon, obscure Gothic princes began, under the protection of Charlemagne, to emerge from their mountain holds, and to drive back the Musulmans.

To the West, the Lombards in Italy, the Bavarians in Germany, had already felt the power of the Franks, and dissembled their hatred and their distrust, from the fear of provoking a too potent enemy. On the north alone, the vast regions of Lower Germany were covered with confederations of the Saxons, whose government was very nearly the same as that of the Franks had

been three centuries before; whose bravery was equally formidable; but the social bonds between whom were too lax to render them a compact body, fitted to attempt a distant conquest. Each of these neighbouring states felt, in turn, the weight of the arms of Charlemagne.

Desiderio, or Didier, had succeeded to Astolfo in 756, on the throne of the Lombards. An attempt of Bertha, mother of Charlemagne, to unite the two royal houses by marriage, had produced the very contrary effect;—the effect, indeed, generally produced by that false policy which founds national alliances on the private affections of sovereigns. In repudiating Desideria, daughter of Didier, Charles had deeply offended his father-in-law, and had imbittered national rivalries by a domestic injury. The donation which Pepin had made to the Holy see, of the provinces conquered from the Greek empire, had proved, from its vagueness and its non-execution, a source of continual animosities between the Lombards and the popes; and Stephen III., who then occupied the papal throne, incessantly solicited Charles to tread in his father's footsteps, to undertake anew the defence of the apostle St. Peter, whom Stephen always assumed to be directly interested in the temporal prosperity of the church of Rome, and to crush the Lombard nations for ever. The young monarch, who found himself at the head of a warlike people, and to whom the chief of his religion offered eternal salvation as an encouragement to him to follow the dictates of his own ambition, his personal resentments, and his most ignoble passions, readily yielded to these solicitations. He convoked an assembly of the Franks at Geneva. On the 1st of May, 773, his warriors were to repair in arms to this place, so foreign to their language and so remote from their homes.

This war, which was destined to secure to Charles one of his first and most brilliant conquests, was not of long duration. His army entered Italy by Mont St. Bernard and Mont Cenis. The Lombards, not daring to meet their enemy in the open field, collected all their forces in Pavia, in the hope that the barbarians, far less skilled than themselves in the art of sieges, would waste their strength before the walls of that strongly fortified place, or would fall victims to the diseases which a foreign climate and their own intemperance would not fail to produce in their lines. But it appears that already Charles had found means to introduce into his camp a better discipline than had hitherto prevailed

in the Frankic armies. He was not discouraged during a siege, or rather a blockade, which lasted nearly a year. He had even sufficient confidence in his lieutenants, to quit his army, while he went to celebrate the festival of Easter at Rome, where he was received by the pope with all the honours which the church ever delights to render to a powerful sovereign. Pavia was at length obliged to open her gates, in the beginning of June, 774. Desiderio was given up to Charles, with his wife and daughter, and sent prisoner to Liege; whence, it appears, he was afterwards transferred to Corbie. The remainder of his life was consecrated to fasting and prayer—the sole consolations of his captivity. His son, Adalgis, who had been at the same time besieged in Verona, had escaped a similar fate by flight. He sought a refuge at the court of Constantinople. The rest of the nation had submitted to the victor; and Charles united the crown of Lombardy to that of the Franks.

The war with the Saxons had not for its object, like that of Italy, the conquest of a country enriched with all the gifts of nature, and the labours of man; it seemed to promise much less glorious results. It was longer, far more inveterate and ferocious, and demanded far greater sacrifices of men and money. The end, however, which Charles proposed to himself, was not less important, nor were the consequences of his successes less durable.

The free and warlike Saxons already possessed those advantages over the Franks, which nations entirely barbarous have over those which begin to be civilized and have acquired more of the vices than the virtues of refinement and prosperity. The confederation of the Saxons was as yet little formidable; but nothing was wanting, save the fortunate accident which might raise up an able chief among them, to unite all the forces of their various leagues, lead them into the South, and once more overrun and conquer Gaul and Italy, as the Visigoths, the Burgundians, the Franks, the Ostrogoths, and the Lombards had successively done. The experience of several centuries had proved, that barbarous nations followed in each other's track; that one which had achieved its conquests, never continued in a condition to resist a new invader; that, in this constant and inevitable disproportion of strength, not only Europe was exposed to a renewal of the same calamities, but that all progress became impossible: the darkness of barbarism grew thicker every day;

and the moment in which any degree of order or tranquillity seemed about to be established in a newly conquered country, might be almost infallibly regarded as the forerunner of a still more terrible convulsion.

We are in a position to judge of a futurity which Charlemagne could not foresee; since we know the character of his successors, and the state of the empire during their reign. This knowledge leaves no doubt as to what would have been the final result of the war between the Franks and the Saxons, if, instead of breaking out in the time of Charlemagne, it had been deferred till the time of Louis the D  bonnaire, or Charles the Bald. Charles civilized Northern Saxony: a century later, the Saxons would have replunged Gaul into complete barbarism; they would have repeated the times of Clovis and of his successors, till, enfeebled in their turn by the delights of the South and the vices of their slaves, they would have given place to new conquerors. Charles may be reproached with having suffered himself to be carried away, during this war, by vengeance and intolerance; with having exhibited instances of cruelty which are at variance with the general bent of his character; but his main object seems to have been consistent with wisdom; and to this day, we probably enjoy the fruits of his success.

The Saxons, whom Pepin and Charles Martel had already combated, with whom Charlemagne was destined to be involved in a much longer conflict, were divided into Ostphalen, or Eastphalians, to the east; Westphalen, or Westphalians, to the west; and Engern, or Angarians, in the centre. Their northern frontiers extended to the Baltic sea, their southern to the Lippe. Like the other Germanic nations, they were not subject to a single master; but to as many chiefs or kings as they counted cantons, and almost villages. They held a general diet every year, on the banks of the Weser, at which they discussed their public affairs.

At one of these meetings, probably that of 672, the Priest St. Libuin presented himself before them, and exhorted them to become converts to the Christian faith; announcing to them at the same time the approaching attack of the greatest sovereign of the West, who would soon ravage their country with fire and sword, and would exterminate the population to avenge his God. The assembled Saxons were strongly inclined to massacre the saint who addressed them in such menacing language. One old

man, however, took him under his protection: he represented to his fellow-countrymen, that the priest was the ambassador of a strange, and, probably, hostile divinity; and, that, however offensive the language in which he delivered the substance of his embassy, they were bound to respect in his person the privileges of an ambassador. The Saxons, in consequence, abstained from avenging the provocations given them by St. Libuin; but, in hatred to the God of whose threats he was the bearer, they burned the church of Deventer, which had just been erected, and massacred all the Christians whom they found assembled there.

At the same time, the Frankic diet was assembled at Worms, under the presidency of Charles. They considered the massacre of the Christians at Deventer as a national aggression, and immediately declared war on the Saxons. This war, the most ferocious, the most terrible, that the Franks ever maintained, endured for thirty-three years. Wedekind, one of the petty kings of the Westphalians, was distinguished from his countrymen by his courage, his perseverance, and his implacable hatred of the Franks: he deserved to be regarded as a worthy antagonist of Charlemagne; and, though he did not unite all his countrymen under his sway as a monarch, he soon obtained the foremost rank in their councils and their armies. But few pitched battles were fought between the two nations: when Charlemagne advanced across the country, with forces infinitely superior to those which the Saxons could collect, Wedekind, with his bravest followers, retreated behind the Elbe, and even into Denmark; while the remaining Saxons promised submission, gave hostages, and consented to receive baptism,—for that, in the eyes of Charlemagne, was the sign of obedience and of civilization. Indeed, in other respects, the Frankic monarch scarcely changed the organization of Saxony. He left to the people their petty kings, with the title of Counts; their laws and internal government, which were very nearly the same as those of his own subjects. In proportion as he advanced, however, he built cities, and founded churches and bishoprics, to which he annexed vast grants of land.

When the term of military service of the freemen had expired, and Charles retired, Wedekind returned at the head of his body of emigrants, raised the country anew, burnt the churches, and often carried his incursions into France; and, by way of reprisal, cruelly devastated the whole banks of the Rhine.

The obstinacy of the Saxons; their contempt of the engagements

they had entered into; their frequent relapses into the ancient national faith,—to the worship celebrated at the Irmensul, or Heermann-Sæule (pillar of the chieftain,)—which, after they had received baptism, was treated by Charlemagne as apostacy; exasperated the Frankic monarch, and this part of his history is sullied by two or three acts of detestable cruelty. The first period of the war extended from 772 to 780: it had been terminated by a great victory obtained by Charles at Buchholz, after which the three confederations of the Saxons had accepted terms of peace. The empire of the Franks had been extended as far as the Elbe; and several new cities, particularly Paderborn, indicated the progress of civilization in Northern Germany; but Wedekind, who was in Denmark, returned into Saxony in 782, raised the whole country, and defeated Charles's generals. Charles, victorious in his turn, demanded that all those accused by their countrymen of inciting this renewal of hostilities, should be given up to him. Four thousand five hundred were delivered into his hands, and he caused them all to be beheaded in the same day, in the autumn of 782, at Verden, on the banks of the Aller.

This atrocious act served only to exasperate the hatred of the Saxons, and to give to the war a character of ferocity which it had not previously displayed. During three years (A. D. 783—785,) more numerous engagements, two great general battles, and frightful ravages, continued even into the heart of the winter, desolated Saxony, while, at the same time, they exhausted the army of the Franks: more blood was shed in three years, than in the nine of the preceding war. At length, however, Wedekind saw that a longer resistance would but aggravate the sufferings of his unhappy country: he demanded peace; received baptism; and, trusting to the honour and generosity of Charlemagne, repaired to his palace of Attigny on the Aisne, whence he departed loaded with presents.

Wedekind was faithful to the engagements he had contracted, and the war in Saxony was suspended for eight years. In 793, it broke out again, in consequence of a general insurrection of the Saxon youth, who had taken no share in the previous conflicts, and who thought that it was reserved for them to recover the national independence, and to avenge the national honour. This last revolt was not completely subdued till the year 804. Charles's only expedient for subjugating these haughty and intrepid people, was, to demand of every village—almost of every

family—hostages chosen from among the boldest and most high-spirited of their young men. He transported them into the various half-deserted provinces of Gaul and Italy; where, severed by immense distances from the country and all the associations of their birth, they at length insensibly adopted the manners and sentiments of their conquerors.

But the wounds inflicted by the sword, however cruel, heal more rapidly than the wasting ulcer of bad laws. Saxony—a country conquered after such long and desolating wars—will reappear before us, after the next generation, much more populous, more warlike, and more in a condition to defend herself, than Gaul, which had triumphed over her in such repeated attacks. It was in the midst of these massacres, these ravages,—of all the violences and miseries attendant on military conquest, that the north of Germany passed from barbarism to civilization; that new cities were founded in the midst of vast forests; that laws were recognised by those who had long made it their glory to acknowledge no law; that a certain acquaintance with letters was the result of the spread of Christianity; lastly, that the arts and the enjoyments of private life were introduced as far as the Elbe, by the frequent travels and long residences of rich and powerful persons, whom Charlemagne led in his train to the extremities of Germany.

We have hitherto contemplated Charlemagne only in the character of a successful warrior: his administration, and the remodelling of the empire, will form the subject of another chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

Extension of Charlemagne's Empire.—Bavaria, Hungary, Spain.—Friendship of Pope Adrian for Charlemagne.—His Death.—Pope Leo III.—Conspiracy against him.—His Visit to Charles at Paderborn.—Charlemagne's public Entry into Rome.—His Coronation as Emperor of the West.—Effect of the Government and Nation of the Franks.—Encouragement given by Charlemagne to Arts and Letters.—Musical Reforms.—Magnificence of Aix-la-Chapelle.—Administrative and economical Regulations in the Capitularies of Charlemagne.—Evils resulting from Slavery.—Extent of Grants to the Crown Vassals.—Mode of Recruiting the Army.—Its fatal Effects.—Institution of Missi Dominici.—Laws of Charlemagne.—Frontiers of the Western Empire.—Relations of the three Empires.—State of the Greek Empire.—Constantine Copronymus.—Iconoclast Controversy.—Leo IV.—His Death.—Irene.—Her Ambition and Crimes.—Project of Marriage between her and Charlemagne.—Division of the Empire of the Saracens.—Omniades.—Fatimides.—Abbasides.—Mervan II.—Massacre of the Omniades by Abul Abbas.—Khaliphate of the West.—Kingdom of Fez.—Abbaside, or Eastern Khaliphs.—Harun al Raschid.—His Love of Learning.—His Embassies to Charlemagne.—Division of the Western Empire among his three Sons, by Charlemagne.—His Character as a Father.—Education of his Children.—Eginhard and Emma.—Death of Charlemagne's two Sons.—Change in the Succession.—Louis, King of Aquitaine, proclaimed Emperor and King.—His Coronation at Aix-la-Chapelle.—Death of Charlemagne.—A. D. 800—814.

WE have taken a brief survey of the history of the two most important conquests of Charlemagne: that which subjected to his authority the whole of Italy, as far as the frontiers of the duchy of Benevento, with the unimportant provinces in possession of the Greeks; and that which, in the first instance, devastated, and afterwards civilized, Saxony. The latter extended the frontiers of the emperor of the Franks to the north-east, as far as the Elbe.

We shall enter into still less detail respecting the subsequent wars of this great king: they were less impressed with the character of his genius, and less connected with the history of civilization. Having once attained the vast power which he exercised over France, Germany, and Italy, he had no need to plan conquests, which followed of themselves. The power of the surrounding nations bore so little proportion to his own, and so far were they from meditating a struggle with the empire of the Franks, or an attempt at its subversion, that they seemed to

have no other object than that of supplanting each other in their master's favour, and of forming a more intimate connexion with the Franks, the more effectually to gratify their mutual spirit of animosity and revenge.

Charles would have probably confined himself within the new boundaries which gave a more compact form to his monarchy; but the Slavonians, who inhabited the other side of the Elbe, summoned each other, with mutual recriminations, before his tribunal. It was at their instigation that he marched his army to the Oder, and even beyond it.

The duke of Bavaria was also accused by his rivals; and, sentence having been pronounced against him by his peers, at the diet of Ingelheim, he was deposed in 788; Bavaria was united to the rest of Germany; and the Franks, whose territory thus touched the frontiers of the Avars and the Huns, penetrated into the country now called Hungary, and advanced upon the lower Danube, as far as the frontiers of the Greek empire. The petty Moorish or Christian princes of the Spanish border were not less assiduous at the court of Charlemagne, nor less eager to accuse and attack each other for the benefit of France; they, in fact, compelled him to extend to the Ebro the new French province, which was designated by the name of the Spanish Marches.

These conquests, which daily became more easy and more stable, and separated the enemies of the Franks from each other by so immense a distance, as to render all union or co-operation against Charlemagne impossible, laid the foundation of the new empire of the West, the name of which was restored by pope Leo III., on Christmas-day, in the year 800. Since the conquest of Italy in 774, the two popes, Adrian, and after him Leo, had constantly acted as the lieutenants of Charlemagne. They kept up a regular correspondence with him; watched his ministers, and employed spies to discover not only the intrigues, but even the sentiments, of the Greeks and Lombards, against whom they sought to heighten the resentment of Charlemagne, that they might afterwards divide the spoil. Adrian, especially, whose reign was very long, (A. D. 772—795,) manifested a degree of enmity to the Lombard dukes, whom Charlemagne had protected in the exercise of their functions, which at length excited his distrust. Whatever was his devotedness to the church, he had sufficient discrimination to distinguish between the passions of

priests and the interests of Christendom. He had endeavoured to ascertain the truth or falsehood of a scandalous accusation against the pope. The dukes in the vicinity of Rome asserted that the pontiff sold his vassals to Saracen merchants, who sent them as slaves into Spain and Africa. The pope acknowledged (A. D. 780) that this traffic in Christians had taken place in his port of *Cività Vecchia*; but he retorted the accusation upon his accusers, declaring that the Lombards had been compelled by famine to sell each other. The question was never satisfactorily cleared up; and Charlemagne, although he treated the pope with every mark of respect, ceased from that time to follow his counsels.

Leo III., the successor of Adrian, had neither evinced less devotedness to Charles, nor betrayed less personal ambition. He had, however, excited a violent resentment at Rome. A conspiracy had been formed against him in 799, by some priests. He had been arrested and wounded: it was even reported that the conspirators had torn out his eyes and tongue, and that he had immediately recovered them by a miracle. He escaped, after some hours, from the hands of his enemies, and, on the invitation of Charles, visited that monarch at Paderborn—the centre of the recent conquests which he had achieved for Christianity. It was there resolved that Charlemagne should take a new journey into Italy, and punish the conspirators; and there, probably, was arranged the solemn coronation which Leo III. was preparing for Charlemagne; though this project was enveloped in profound secrecy, lest it should disgust the Franks and other barbarian nations, who had hitherto acknowledged Charlemagne as their chief. On the 24th of November, A. D. 800, Charlemagne made his entry into Rome. Seven days after, before an assembly of Frankic and Roman lords, he permitted Leo III. to exculpate himself, on oath, from the accusation preferred against him; and upon the authority of this single testimony of his innocence, he condemned his enemies to death, as calumniators and conspirators. In return for these marks of favour, on Christmas-day, after performing mass in the church of the Vatican, before Charles and the assembled people, Leo advanced towards him, and placed a golden crown upon his head. Immediately the clergy and the pope exclaimed, according to the formula observed for the Roman emperors,—“Long life and victory to the august Charles, crowned by God great and pacific emperor of the Ro-

mans!" These acclamations and this crown were considered as expressing the revival of the empire of the West, after an interruption of 324 years from the period when Augustulus was deposed.

In receiving the imperial crown, Charlemagne might be said to adopt the recollections of Rome and of the empire. By this act he declared himself the representative of ancient civilization, of social order, and legitimate authority, and not of the barbaric conquerors, who founded all their rights upon the sword. By thus allowing their chief to receive a Roman dignity in exchange for the rank which he held from them, the Franks unconsciously subjected themselves to be treated like the Romans. The chancery of Charlemagne adopted all the pompous titles of the court of Byzantium; and the nobles and counsellors of the new emperor no longer approached him without placing one knee on the ground, and kissing his foot.

Whatever opinion may be formed concerning an etiquette, which, perhaps, Charles himself despised, he at least evinced great zeal in his efforts to administer the government of his kingdom according to law, and to revive a taste for science, literature, and the useful arts. He gave a new impulse to that vast portion of Europe which submitted to his sway; and though its action was for a long time suspended or paralyzed, from him may be dated the birth of modern civilization.

It was in Italy, more especially, that Charles sought teachers, for the purpose of re-establishing the public schools, which, throughout the whole of France, had fallen into decay.

"He assembled at Rome," says his historiographer, the monk of Angoulême, "masters versed in the arts of grammar and arithmetic, whom he brought into France, enjoining them to encourage and diffuse a taste for letters; for, before the reign of our lord Charles, no attention had been paid in France to the liberal arts." At the same time, Charles wrote to all the bishops and convents to resume those studies, which had been too much neglected. "In the writings," said he, "frequently addressed to us by the convents of late years, while we admired the good sense of the monks, we observed that their style was uncultivated; that what a pious devotion faithfully dictated internally, they were unable to express externally, without betraying their neglect and ignorance of language. Our wish is," he added, "that you should all be, what all soldiers of the church ought

to be, inwardly devout, outwardly learned; chaste, that you may live well; erudite, that you may speak well."

Among the revolutions in art accomplished by Charlemagne, must be mentioned that of music. This may be particularly attributed to the importance attached to church singing, and to the substitution of the Gregorian for the Ambrosian chant. It was not, however, without difficulty, that the united authority of the emperor and the pope triumphed over the habits and the obstinacy of the Frankic priests: orders, threats, were insufficient; it was necessary to seize and burn, by main force, all the books or antiphonaries of the Ambrosian ritual. Charlemagne went so far as to yield to the solicitations of the pope, and condemned to the flames some of the singers as well as the music. The Frankic priests at length submitted to adopt the Roman mode of singing. "Only," says a chronicler of that time, "the Franks, whose voices were naturally rough and barbarous, could not execute the trills and cadences, nor the alternately sustained and interrupted sounds of the Romans; they rather broke them in their throats, than uttered them. Two normal schools of religious music were founded for the whole empire: one in the palace of the emperor, which adjoined his chapel, and which was at last fixed at Aix-la-Chapelle—whence, probably, the French name of that city; the other at Metz.

The other fine arts were also patronised by Charles; and his taste in this respect is the more remarkable, as every sentiment of art seemed obliterated from the minds of his contemporaries: but the sight of Rome had struck him with admiration; and he felt a desire to transplant to the confines of Germany the beauties which so impressively marked the ancient grandeur of Rome. At the beginning of his reign, he changed his residence every winter; nor, since the abandonment of Paris by its kings, had any preference indicated which was the capital of France. As, however, he advanced in age, he became more attached to Aix-la-Chapelle. He adorned that city with sumptuous edifices, palaces, churches, bridges, and new streets: he even supplied it from Ravenna with marble, and with statues, the beauty of which had particularly excited his admiration. Hydraulic architecture attracted, in its turn, his attention. He formed a project of connecting the Rhine and the Danube by a navigable canal, and pursued it with great ardour and perseverance; but, after the expenditure of immense sums, he was compelled to relinquish

it; either because art was not yet sufficiently advanced, or because the measures adopted were not judiciously conceived.

Even the details of domestic economy were the objects of the care and the legislation of Charlemagne. His revenues were mainly drawn from landed estates of immense extent. These estates were dispersed through every part of his empire, and inhabited by a numerous class of subjects called *Fiscalins*. The serfs of the fisc, or royal treasury, were of a rather higher order than those of the nobles: Charles published a law, or *Capitulary*, for their government, which contains the most important information respecting the civilization of Europe at that period. He assigned to each royal city a judge, who also filled the office of steward and administrator. The judge received all the produce in kind, and sold it for the benefit of the monarch. As a proof of the attention which Charles paid to the most minute details, the order which he gave to these judges, to breed hens and geese, to sell their eggs, and to cultivate every kind of fruit and vegetables in his gardens and immense estates, has often been quoted.

These judges, however, exercised far more important functions, for they fixed the vocation of every man under their authority. The emperor determined that each of his royal cities should contain a certain number of men of all the professions and trades specified by him, from the highest to the lowest. Upon the judge devolved the duty of selecting, among the fiscal slaves, those whom he thought best qualified for each of these occupations, and to bind them out as apprentices, and thus provide a supply of hands for all the trades. On every occasion, rule and authority were substituted for personal interest; and what among us is done from voluntary enterprise, was done by order in the empire of Charlemagne.

In a reign which had already lasted more than thirty years, Charles had communicated an impulse which rapidly accelerated the progress of civilization. Extending his protection equally to public education, to literature, arts, and laws, he could not have failed to raise the character of the nation, had he fixed it upon a broader basis. Unfortunately, the benefit of these improvements was confined to the extremely small minority of freemen, who, lost amid thousands of slaves, soon relapsed into the barbarism by which they were universally surrounded. Slavery—the consuming canker of great states—which had already effected the ruin of the Roman empire, was equally destructive to that of

Charlemagne, and drew upon it those unparalleled disasters which quickly followed his brilliant reign. Nor ought we, perhaps, to blame the legislator for this: for neither he nor his subjects were more competent to conceive (what had never existed) a society without slaves, than we to conceive a society without poor. In the only form of society known at that period, the exhaustion produced by slavery was the consequence of property itself. The increase of riches was inevitably followed by the absorption of the small properties by the great; by the multiplication of slaves, and the absolute discontinuance of all free labour. When freemen were unable to maintain themselves in idleness by the labour of others, rather than be confounded with slaves in the common employments of husbandry, they sold their little inheritance to some rich neighbour, and joined the army: their families soon became extinct.

The more the emperor extended his conquests, the greater was the quantity of disposable land with which he could reward his servants: the more their ambition was gratified, the more they thought themselves entitled to still larger grants. According to the notions of those times, jurisdiction—indeed, sovereignty itself—was so blended with property, that each of the dukedoms, earldoms, and lordships that Charles conferred on his captains, was not merely a government, but a patrimony, stocked with slaves who laboured for their masters. In his grants to the convents, we invariably find that he gives them lands “with all the inhabitants, their houses, slaves, meadows, fields, moveables, and immoveables.” Several thousands of families were doomed to labour to maintain a courtier; and the learned Alcuin, whom Charles had enriched by his liberality, though he had not raised him to a level with the dukes and bishops of his court, had twenty thousand slaves under his orders.

By consulting the collection of the laws of Charlemagne, known under the name of Capitularies, we see more clearly how it was that the free population of his empire necessarily disappeared, to make room for a servile population. One of the principal objects of these laws was to show how every Frank must contribute to the defence of his country; march when the *heerbann* (the summons to the army) was proclaimed, or suffer severe punishment if he failed in this duty. All the proprietors of a *manse* of land were called out to serve in the army. The *manse*, valued at twelve acres, seems to have been considered sufficient

for the maintenance of a servile family; but he only who possessed three or more *manses*, was obliged to march in person: he who possessed only one, was to join with three of his equals in providing a soldier. This gratuitous military service necessarily led to the ruin of the freemen. The soldier was obliged to procure arms at his own expense: he was required to present himself with a lance and shield, or with a bow, two strings, and twelve arrows. He was also to bring a sufficient quantity of provisions for his subsistence till he joined the army; after which he received an allowance, or rations, for three months, from the treasury. This service was not regarded as excessive under the Merovingian kings, when wars were not frequent, and the soldier was not marched to a great distance from his home. But under Charlemagne, when every year was marked by some new expedition, and when the Frankic army, called to take the field against the Saracens, Danes, or Huns, traversed the whole of Europe and underwent the inconveniences of every climate, gratuitous service was attended with the most intolerable vexations. Families in circumstances of ease and comfort were soon plunged into poverty; the population rapidly declined; liberty and property were a burden rather than an advantage. Whoever, after a summons, neglected to join the army, was punished by a fine* of sixty golden sous; and as this sum generally exceeded his means, he was reduced to a state of temporary slavery till he paid it. This law, if rigorously executed, would, of itself, have sufficed to occasion the rapid disappearance of the whole class of freemen. As a mitigation, the legislator allowed the person whose misfortune it was to die in this state of slavery, to be considered as having discharged this fine, so that his property was not seized, nor his children reduced to captivity.

The most important political innovation introduced by Charlemagne into the administration of his kingdom, was the creation of the imperial deputies named *missi dominici*. These were two officers—one an ecclesiastic, the other a layman, both of high rank—to whom Charles assigned the inspection of a district composed of a certain number of earldoms or counties. Their office was to inquire into the conduct of the judges and counts; to regulate the finances; to receive and examine the accounts of the royal cities, the revenues of which constituted the principal riches

* The fine itself, from a common enough misuse of language, has been commonly called *heribannum*. The *arrière-ban* is a corruption of this.—*Transl.*

of the sovereign. They were to visit each county every three months, and hold assizes for the administration of justice. "They are also," says the legislator, "to be present in the middle of May, each in his legation, attended by all our bishops, abbots, counts, and vassals, attorneys, and vidames of abbeys. Every count shall be attended by his vicars, centenaries, and three or four of his principal echevins, or aldermen. After having examined into the state of the Christian religion, and that of the ecclesiastical orders, the deputies shall inquire in what manner those invested with power discharge their duties; whether they govern the people according to the will of God and to our orders, and whether they act in concert."

Charlemagne had not attempted to give to his people a new civil or criminal code; on the contrary, he confirmed the right which his subjects claimed, to be governed according to their national laws, and convicted solely on the testimony of men, or by the judgment of God; thus excluding all proceedings by inquest or torture, which the example of the ecclesiastical courts introduced at a much later period. Charles republished, with some corrections and additions, the ancient laws of the Salians, Ripuarians, Lombards, Saxons, and other subjugated nations. He preserved the fundamental principle of all these laws—the compensation of crimes by fines—only subjecting some of them to a higher tariff; as, for instance, offences against the clergy; which were punished with increased severity. The examination of all these laws leaves no doubt respecting the frequency of atrocious crimes; and in proportion as either the codes of barbarians, or those of Charlemagne, are studied with attention, we arrive at the conviction that the civilization so often unfavourably contrasted with the simplicity of the good old times, was the only remedy for the profound corruption of morals which marked the ages of semi-barbarism.

The examination of the labours of Charlemagne as a legislator, adds, unquestionably, to the idea we have formed of his genius. We find him every where establishing order and regularity, and extending his powerful protection to every part of his states; but, in the midst of his greatest glory, it is not difficult to foresee the inevitable ruin of all these institutions, if we keep in view that the nation of the Franks was, at that period, exclusively composed of proprietors of men and of land: they alone were rich and independent, consulted on public affairs, admitted to the discussions of the *Champ de Mai*, and to service in the army.

In proportion as their riches, which were all territorial, increased, their number decreased. The apparent progress of opulence was a symptom of a diminution of real strength, because every new rich man represented and replaced several ancient free families. It should, therefore, excite no surprise that the mass of the people attracted scarcely any notice; that they took no interest in their affairs; were conscious neither of energy nor of thought; nor that the nation passed in an instant from the height of power to the last degree of abasement. Some thousands of noblemen, lost among millions of brutalized slaves, who had scarcely a claim to a country or even to the dignity of man, were incompetent, by their own unaided efforts, to preserve to France either her laws, her power, or her liberty.

The frontiers of the new empire of the West in Italy and Illyria, met those of the Eastern empire. The navigation of the Latins likewise forced them to maintain some commercial intercourse with the empire of the khaliphs of Syria. In spite of national prejudices and religious animosities, the three empires which divided the civilized world considered each other as equals; and the relations of Charlemagne with the courts of Constantinople and of Bagdad, were unquestionable evidences of the rank to which the monarchy of the Franks had raised itself.

At Constantinople, three sovereigns of the Isaurian race had successively occupied the throne of the East, from 717 to 780. Leo III. had courageously repulsed the Saracens. Constantine Copronymus, whom the Catholics have represented as a tyrant, was, perhaps, cruel in his persecution of the worshippers of images: but, during his long reign, (from 741 to 774,) he gave ample evidence of activity and courage. He had waged war by turns upon the banks of the Euphrates and of the Danube; he had taught the Greeks, that the ancient prejudice which retained their sovereigns prisoners in the palace, was not less fatal to the princes than to the people; and that a monarch lost nothing of his dignity by heading his legions on horseback, and leading them himself against the enemy. His wise administration had restored plenty to the Greek provinces; and by means of new colonies, he had repeopled the deserts of Thrace. Leo IV., his son, during his shorter reign, (from 775 to 780,) had shown less strength of character; but he was not devoid of the qualities which had distinguished the Isaurian race, and which, after so

long a series of calamities, had restored, in the eighth century, the glory and power of the Eastern empire.

But the three Isaurian emperors, who had seen with indignation Christianity degenerate into idolatry, had been, during the whole of their reigns, involved in a dangerous war against the worshippers of images; against the monks and priests, who made a scandalous traffic of the protection of these household gods, and of the miracles they pretended to perform by their intercession. The emperors thought they could reform the church by their edicts, and attempted to arrest the progress of this superstition by threats, severity and punishments. The religious passion they combated, derived additional force from opposition: and they themselves, misguided by the animosity excited during a long struggle, transgressed all bounds of moderation, and rendered themselves odious to their subjects by their intolerance. Their reign was unceasingly agitated by seditions: the monks continually incited their subjects to revolt; and when the seditious were punished for their audacity, they were revered as martyrs. Irritated by their preaching, their abuse, and their plots, Leo IV. carried his persecution so far as to inflict the punishment of death upon some of the worshippers of images. During the heat of his resentment, he discovered, even in his wife's bed, two images to which she had offered secret worship. (Feb. 710.) Leo took cruel vengeance on those who had introduced into his own palace a superstition which he held in abhorrence: he expressed his indignation at the conduct of Irene, and was preparing to take measures for her trial—perhaps for her death—when suddenly, in attempting to place upon his head a crown consecrated by his wife to the crucifix, his skin became covered with black pustules wherever the crown touched it; he was seized with a burning fever, and died in a few hours. All the ecclesiastical writers have represented this as a miracle wrought to avenge the offended deity.

Irene, who, there is every reason to believe, had assisted in the performance of this miracle,—probably the only means which could have saved her,—was still not entirely out of danger. She caused herself to be crowned, together with her son, Constantine V., who was not more than ten or twelve years old, reserving to herself the sole authority. But she had against her, all the grandees, jealous of the power of a woman; all the partisans of the late emperor, who had not much faith in miracles, which so con-

veniently dispose of kings; all the high iconoclast clergy; all the public functionaries raised to power by her predecessors, and all the Isaurians. Irene sought protection in the populace, who were under the guidance of the monks. She re-established the worship of images with great pomp; honoured as martyrs those who had suffered under the iconoclasts; shut up the brothers of her husband in convents; put to death some whom she accused of conspiracy; and thus obtained a high reputation for piety and zeal in the cause of orthodoxy.

The popes had invariably taken part against the iconoclast emperors. They had aided Irene with all their power; and the second council of Nice, assembled by this empress, having in 787 re-established and confirmed the worship of images, Adrian, whose legates had presided in this council, transmitted its acts to the assembly of the Western church, which Charlemagne convoked at Frankfurt in 794, that they might be recognised as proceeding from an œcumenical council, and having the force of ecclesiastical law.

The Western churches had abstained neither from the superstitions nor the subtleties which disfigured Christianity; but they had invariably rejected with horror the worship of images, as an act of idolatry. It is probable that the almost absolute ignorance or neglect of the fine arts had contributed to preserve the Franks and Germans from the adoration of these gods made with man's hands. Images were seldom seen in their churches, while they adorned all the temples of the Greeks. At least, the chronicles of the time, and the lives of the saints, when speaking of the Latin church, never mention that protection granted to a particular person or country by a miraculous image, so continually referred to in the history of the church of the Greeks. In the West, all these local miracles were attributed to relics, as they were in the East to images. The worship of the bones of the saints was more in accordance with the barbarism and the gloomy northern imaginations of the Teutonic people, as that of their resemblance was with the refinement and taste of the Greeks. The church of Rome availed itself of either, indifferently; and although, even in Italy, images were much more rare than in Greece, they were much less so than beyond the Alps. The popes were indebted to this quarrel for their sovereignty in Italy; as they were to the adoration of relics for the treasures which they every year received from France and Germany, in exchange for the bones taken from the catacombs.

But the influence of the pope was not sufficient to secure the reception, in the Western church, of the doctrine which he had himself found so profitable. The fathers assembled at Frankfurt expressed their indignation at the idolatry attempted to be introduced into Christendom. "It has been thought proper," say they, "to refer to the assembly the question of the new synod of the Greeks, on the subject of the worship of images, in which it is written, that those who refuse to offer to the images of the saints the same worship and adoration as to the divine Trinity, shall be anathematized; but our most holy fathers above mentioned, rejecting, in every respect, the adoration service, (the worship of *latria* and *dulia*,) despised and condemned them with one accord."

The entire church seemed divided: three hundred and fifty bishops had subscribed to the council of Nice; three hundred subscribed to that of Frankfurt. The latter was besides supported by the powerful authority of Charlemagne, who himself dictated a treatise against the worship of images, known under the title of the *Carolinian Books*.

Adrian had no mind to expose himself to the displeasure of such a protector. He endeavoured to evade the question; to discriminate, where there was no distinction; to show that the infallible council of Frankfurt had been still more mistaken as to facts than as to principles; that the council held at Nice (not at Constantinople) had not said what the Germans imputed to it; and that, in spite of the contradictory declarations of these two assemblies, the unity of faith of the church was not shaken; in short, he succeeded in silencing the discussion. The two councils are recognised as having the authority of law in the church. The two doctrines repose in peace beside each other: for France and Germany, although they have not expelled images from their temples, pay them no religious worship; while Italy and Spain have confirmed the adoration of images, and daily celebrate some miracle of their local divinities.

From the beginning of her reign, the empress Irene had sought the friendship of the powerful monarch of the Latins, and had entertained the project of bringing about a marriage between her son and one of the daughters of Charlemagne: but—whether the dispute concerning images had occasioned any coolness between them, or whether Irene, actuated by jealousy towards her son, thought it imprudent to procure him so powerful an ally—the

treaty was broken off in an offensive manner. Constantine VI. married an Armenian princess; and some hostilities upon the frontiers of the duchy of Benevento were the consequences of this rupture between the Greeks and the Franks.

On the other hand, the ambitious Irene, who had so exactly chosen the favourable moment for getting rid of her husband, that she might reign in the name of her son, could not submit to share the authority with him, when he had attained the age of manhood. A long protracted struggle ensued between the mother and the son, during which Irene was banished to Athens, the place of her birth. By feigning unconditional submission, she at length induced Constantine to recall her to the court of Constantinople, where she employed her ascendancy over him in leading him into oblique and perilous courses.

In the year 792, the emperor had punished a conspiracy of his uncles against him, by depriving two of their sight and cutting off the noses of the other four. In January, 795, he repudiated the Armenian Maria, whom he charged with conspiracy, and married in her place one of her attendants, named Theodora. Irene herself had urged him to gratify this new passion; while at the same time she denounced him to the clergy, and especially to the monks, over whom she preserved unlimited influence, for having violated the laws and discipline of the church. By these artifices, she succeeded in exciting the priests and bigots to sedition, and in organizing plots both in the capital and provinces. At last the conspirators, under her direction, seized the unfortunate Constantine, on the 15th of June, 797; dragged him into the chamber in which he was born, and tore out his eyes with such barbarous violence, that he expired a short time after in horrible agonies.

Irene was then placed on the throne; and, for the first time, the Roman world was governed by a woman, who ruled not as a regent or guardian, but in her own proper right. The church shut its eyes to Irene's crimes, in consideration of her having re-established the worship of images, which her son had lately interdicted; and the Greeks assigned her a place among the saints in their calendar. But the supposed weakness of a female reign was probably what imboldened Leo III. to dispose of the crown of the East, as if it had been his own; or suggested to him a scheme more extravagant still,—that of uniting by marriage the empire he had just re-established, with that which had stood the

shock of ages. In 801, whilst Charles, who had passed a year in widowhood, was in Italy for his coronation, he demanded the hand of Irene; and though this ambitious princess was far from intending to compromise her power, by dividing it with a husband, the negotiation, which continued for a long time, contributed to preserve peace between the two empires.

The relations which subsisted between the empire of Charlemagne, and that of the Saracens, form a characteristic part of his history. His territories bordered upon theirs in Spain; he found them again in Africa, along the whole line of coast opposite to the shores of France and Italy; and his subjects carried on an extensive commerce with them in the Levant. But the Saracens had ceased to form a single empire. Just at the time when the Carolingian dynasty succeeded the ancient royal line of France, the house of the Abbasides had succeeded that of the Ommiades in the East. The colossus that had bestridden the whole South was now broken, and the Musulmans were no longer objects of terror to all their neighbours. This revolution did more for the deliverance of Europe from the Musulman arms, than even the battle of Poitiers. Romance writers are therefore guilty of an anachronism, in making Charlemagne the champion of Christendom; for, in his time, the perils to which it had been exposed were past.

The Ommiades, who, for the space of ninety years, (661—750,) had ruled with so much glory in the empire of the faithful, had nevertheless always been considered, by a large party in the East, as usurpers; they were reproached with being descendants of the most inveterate enemy of the prophet, whilst there still remained legitimate descendants of the branch of Hashemides, and even of his own blood. The Ommiades were distinguished by their white standards; the colour of the Fatimides, descendants of Ali and of Fatima, the daughter of Mahommed, was green. At the time we speak of, their chiefs had either not sufficient ability or sufficient ambition to enforce their rights. But the descendants of Abbas, the uncle of the prophet, called Abbasides, whose banner was black, ultimately raised the whole East in their favour.

After long and cruel civil wars, Mervan II., the last of the Ommiades, in spite of the talents and virtues imputed to him, was defeated and killed in Egypt, on the 10th of February, 750. Abul Abbas, the first of the Abbasides, was appointed his successor by Abu-Moslem, the real chief of the party, the king-maker, as he

is called, or the author of *the vocation of the Abbasides*. The throne of the new khaliph was strengthened by the victories of Abu-Moslem. The defeated Ommiades accepted the peace that was offered them, and relied with confidence on the oaths of their rival. Four and twenty members of the family were invited to Damascus, to a feast of reconciliation, which was to be the seal of a new alliance. They met without suspicion: they were massacred without mercy. The festive board was placed over their palpitating bodies while they yet breathed, and the orgies of the Abbasides were prolonged amidst the groans and agonies of their expiring rivals.

One only of the Ommiades escaped this butchery; he quitted Syria, and traversed Africa a fugitive: but in the valleys of Mount Atlas, he learned that the white flag was still triumphant in Spain. About the middle of August, therefore, 755, he presented himself to his partisans on the coast of Andalusia, and was saluted by them as the true khaliph; the whole of Spain was soon subject to him, and his seat of government was fixed at Corduba. There he took the title of Emir al Mumenin, Commander of the Faithful; which the people of the West converted into the barbarous name Miramolín. He died after a glorious reign of thirty years. His son and his grandson, Hesham, (A. D. 788—796,) and Al Hacam, (796—822,) were the contemporaries of Charlemagne, and fought with success several times against his generals, and against his son Louis le Débonnaire. The Ommiades of Spain retained the sovereignty of the Peninsula for two hundred and fifty years: their dynasty expired in 1038; and the division, at this period, of the Western khaliphate into a great number of small principalities, contributed much to facilitate the conquests of the Christians.

Towards the middle of the eighth century, an independent monarchy arose in Africa, that of the Edrisides of Fez, who declared themselves descendants of the Fatimide branch, and who recognised neither the Western nor the Eastern khaliph. In the year 801, Charlemagne received an embassy from their emir, or sultan, Ibrahim; and being then at war with the Ommiades in Spain, he was disposed to ally himself to their rivals in Africa and the East. These latter, the Abbaside khaliphs, notwithstanding the loss of so many vast provinces in the West, still retained a degree of power not unworthy the first successors of Mahomed; and the splendour of their court presented a remarkable contrast to the severe austerity of the first believers. The victorious Almanzor, (754—775,) his son, and two grandsons, Mahdi,

(775—785,) Hadi, (785, 786,) and Harun al Rashid, (786—809,) were the contemporaries of the early Carolingians. These were the monarchs who introduced the arts and the cultivation of science among the Arabs, and under whose influence their progress in the career of literature was as rapid as that which they had recently made in arms. Translations of all the scientific books of the Greeks into Arabic were undertaken, and liberally rewarded by the khaliph. Harun al Rashid was always surrounded by learned men, and in all his travels he was attended by a numerous body of them. He made it a rule never to build a mosque without attaching a school to it; and his munificence is the source whence sprung those numerous Arabic writers by whom his age was illustrated. The memory of the two embassies from Harun al Rashid to Charlemagne, has been preserved to us by the writers of the West; the one in 801, the other in 807. The first ambassadors of Harun, with chivalrous politeness, bore the keys of the holy sepulchre as an offering to the greatest monarch professing the religion of Christ. The second brought as a present from the khaliph to Charles, a clock ornamented with automaton figures, which moved and played on various musical instruments, very much resembling those which are now made at Geneva for the Levant market. This is a proof, among others, that the seat of the mechanical arts, as well as of literature and science, has, in the course of ten centuries, been wholly changed. After the reign of Harun al Rashid, the empire of the khaliphs, the seat of which had been removed to Bagdad, by Almanzor, in 757, still maintained for several ages the glory of pre-eminence in literature and the arts, though it almost entirely relinquished its triumphs in arms. The foundation of the new dynasties of the Aglabides in Africa, the Fatimides in Egypt, the Taherides in Khorasan, the Soffarides in Persia, would soon throw us into absolute confusion, if we attempted to follow out such a labyrinth of almost unknown names and countries.

Mean time, Charlemagne, dreaded by his enemies, respected by the whole world, became sensible of the approach of old age. He had three sons arrived at manhood, among whom he divided his monarchy, in presence of the diet of Thionville, in 806. To Charles, the eldest, he gave France and Germany; to Pepin, the second, Italy, Bavaria, and Pannonia; to Louis, the youngest, Aquitaine, Provence, and the marches of Spain. At the same time he provided for his daughters: he had seven, perhaps eight, all remarkable for their beauty, and whom he had always treated

with great tenderness. "He had devoted," says Eginhard, "much attention to the education of his children, and was desirous that his daughters, as well as his sons, should addict themselves to the same liberal studies which he had himself pursued. When his sons were of sufficient age, he accustomed them, according to the usage of the Franks, to ride on horseback, and to exercise themselves in arms and in the chase. To form his daughters to habits of industry, and counteract the pernicious influence of a life of ease and luxury, they were taught to work in wool, to handle the distaff and the spindle, and to employ themselves in all the works becoming their sex and age. His children always supped with him. His sons accompanied him on horseback when he travelled, his daughters followed; and the whole train was closed by the guards, who protected them. As they were very beautiful, and greatly beloved by him, it is strange that he never gave them in marriage to any of his nobles or allied princes. He kept them always with him till his death, declaring that he could not dispense with their society: yet, however happy in every other respect, through them he felt the malice of fortune. It is true, he dissembled his grief, and appeared as if slander had never raised its voice, or breathed the slightest suspicion upon them." It is said that the historian, from whom we borrow these particulars, was not a stranger to the failings to which he alludes; and that the fair Emma, one of the daughters of Charlemagne, carried her lover, Eginhard, on her shoulders, in the morning, that his footsteps in the snow might not betray his nocturnal visits to her pavilion. This anecdote has been preserved in the convent founded by Eginhard himself.

If Charlemagne bore with resignation the misconduct of his daughters, to whom he had always set a dangerous example, he betrayed the feelings of a true and tender father, when he had the misfortune to lose, successively, his eldest and favourite daughter, Rotrude; his second son, Pepin, who died at Milan, on the 4th of July, 810; and, lastly, his eldest son Charles, who died at Aix-la-Chapelle, on the 4th of December, 811. Fortitude in sustaining domestic sorrows was at that time regarded as a mark of the greatness of soul which was expected of a hero; hence the profound grief of Charlemagne, and the tears he was seen to shed for the loss of his children, excited more censure than compassion.

The emperor, however, hastened to provide for the government of his states. His eldest son had left no children; but Pe-

pin, the second, had one son and five daughters. Charles destined the son, Bernhard, to inherit the kingdom of Italy; and, having announced this intention in the Champ de Mai, assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle, he sent him into Lombardy, accompanied by Walla, his bastard cousin, as his counsellor. At the same time he judged it prudent to transmit, during his lifetime, all his titles to his third son, Louis, king of Aquitaine. "For this purpose, in the presence of the states assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle, in September, 813, he presented him," says an ancient chronicle, "to the bishops, abbots, counts, and senators of the Franks, requesting them to choose him king and emperor. To this all consented with one accord, saying, it would be well. And it pleased the people also; so that the empire was decreed to him by the delivering up of the golden crown, while the people cried out, 'Long live the emperor Louis!'" Charles, fearing that the pope, who had conferred upon him the title of emperor, would assert that his authority was necessary to confirm it to another, was desirous that his son, who belonged to the people of the West, to the army, and to its leaders, and who had been chosen by them, should hold his crown from God alone. He, therefore, caused a crown of gold similar to his own to be made, and to be placed upon the altar of the church of Aix-la-Chapelle. He then desired Louis to take it himself, and place it upon his own head. After this ceremony, he sent him back to Aquitaine.

Charles lost his strength earlier than might have been expected from the vigour of his constitution, or the active life he had led. His decline had long been perceptible; when, about the middle of January, 814, he was attacked by a fever on leaving the bath. During the seven days it lasted, he ceased to eat, and took nothing but a little water. On the seventh day he received the sacrament from the hand of Gildebald, his almoner. The following morning, he made a last effort to raise his feeble right hand to make the sign of the cross upon his head and breast; then, composing his limbs for his final rest, he closed his eyes, uttering, with a low voice:—" *In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum,*" and expired.

This was on the 28th of January, 814. Charles was born in 742, and was in his seventy-second year. He reigned forty-seven years: thirty-three over the Lombards, and fourteen over the Western empire. He was buried at Aix-la-Chapelle, in the church of St. Mary, founded by himself.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Louis le Débonnaire.—His Character and Popularity.—His Reforms.—Division of the Government with his Sons.—Vacillations of Louis.—Revolt of Bernhard, King of Italy.—His cruel Death.—Judith of Bavaria.—Her Beauty and Ascendency.—National Assemblies.—Public Confession and Penance of Louis.—Discord between Louis and his Sons, Chlothaire and Louis.—Universal Disorder in the Empire.—Traffic in Christian Children.—External Relations.—Scandinavian Nations.—Kings of Denmark.—Revolts of Bretons and Gascons.—Spain.—Alphonso the Chaste.—Abderahman.—Italy.—Chlothaire.—Duke of Benevento.—Venice.—Eastern Frontiers.—Slavonic Tribes.—Decline of the Eastern Empire.—Muslim Conquests.—Crete.—Sicily.—Dethronement and Banishment of Irene.—Nicephorus.—Leo the Armenian.—His Death.—Michael the Stammerer.—Theophilus.—His Character and Death.—Cessation of Inter-course between the Eastern and Western Empires.—Revolt of the three Sons of Louis.—Dethronement of Judith.—Antipathy between the Gauls and the Franks.—Attachment of the latter to the Emperor.—Reaction in his favour.—His Reconciliation with his Sons.—Recall of Judith.—Her Intrigues.—Desertion of the Emperor by all his Followers.—His public Degradation and Penance.—Death of Pepin, King of Aquitaine.—Conduct of Louis.—Intrigues of Judith and Chlothaire.—Attacks of the Normans and the Saracens on the Coasts of France.—Death of Louis le Débonnaire. A. D. 814—840.

THE new sovereign of the empire of the West—whom the Latins, the Italians, and the Germans named the Pious,* the French le Débonnaire,—was thirty-six years old at the death of his father. He had been married sixteen years to Ermengarde, daughter of Ingheramne, duke of Hasbaigne. She had already borne him three sons; Chlothaire, (or, as it soon came to be spelled, Lothaire,) Pepin, and Louis. During thirty-three years he had borne the title of king; for he was in his cradle when, in the year 781, his father sent him into Aquitaine, with the view of inducing the people of the south of Gaul to imagine that they had their sovereign in the midst of them. As soon as

* The Germans call him either *Ludwig der Fromme*, or *der Gütige*, *Fromm*, though it means pious, means, also, amiable, gracious. *Gütige* is kind, good-natured. In that part of the dominions of the king of England which he inherits from the dukes of Normandy, and where the Anglican service is performed in French, the words of the Liturgy, “our most gracious king, William,” &c., are at this day rendered, “notre seigneur et gouverneur très-débonnaire, Guillaume,” &c.—*Transl.*

he was sufficiently advanced in age to afford any certain indications of his character, it was marked by sweetness, love of justice, beneficence; above all, by weakness. He had carried on a protracted war in the Pyrennees against the Gascons and the Moors, and had conducted himself with honour as a soldier; yet those who remarked his zeal for religion, his constant attention to the discipline of the church, already said of him, that he was better fitted for the convent than the throne; and Louis, who envied the devotion of his great uncle Karloman, who had abdicated sovereign power to become a monk of Monte Cassino, regarded their words as the highest praise that could be bestowed on him. For some time his beneficence so far exceeded his prudence that his finances were in considerable disorder; but these had been re-established with the assistance of his father, and his good management had enabled him to deliver the rural population from the destructive privilege claimed by the soldiery, of drawing their support from the peasantry. The people had the highest opinion of his virtue; and when, on the news of his father's death, he proceeded from Toulouse to Aix-la-Chapelle, he was received, in every place through which he passed, as a saviour come to put a period to the long-sufferings of the empire.

Indeed, during the brilliant reign of Charlemagne, even under the protection of so great a man, disorder and oppression had increased in every province: the freemen had been ruined by continual wars; the nobles had abused their favour at court; they had despoiled their poorer neighbours of their inheritances; a great number of them they had reduced to servitude. Many of the small proprietors had even voluntarily renounced a freedom they had no longer the power to defend, and had begged to be ranked amongst the slaves of the nobles, who promised them protection. Louis hastened to send throughout the empire fresh imperial messengers (*missi dominici*,) to examine into the claims and petitions of those who had been robbed either of their patrimony or of their liberty; and the number of the oppressed who recovered their rights was found to exceed all belief. The mistrust of Charles had deprived the Saxons and the Frieslanders of the right of transmitting their property by bequest to their children. Louis repealed this odious prohibition, and placed them on the same footing with his other subjects. In the Spanish marches many Christian emigrants from Moorish Spain had obtained from Charles the grant of deserted lands recently conquered, and

had brought them into cultivation; but the fields which had been rendered fertile by their own labours had been quickly seized by powerful nobles, who in some instances had obtained fresh grants from the emperor, in others had taken possession by force. Louis afforded his protection to these unhappy emigrants, and restored their property; but he had not sufficient power to secure to them its permanent possession: such was the audacity of the nobles, such the weakness of the vassals, that, in spite of every security the monarch could give, the poor man was continually plundered.

Another reform effected by Louis was looked upon as indicating but little respect for his father's memory. Charles's palace at Aix-la-Chapelle sufficiently attested the dissoluteness of his morals. There he had lived, surrounded, even in old age, by his numerous mistresses. Under the same roof dwelt his seven daughters and his five nieces; all beautiful, and all equally distinguished for their gallantries. Before taking possession of this palace, Louis effected its evacuation by means of a military execution: he expelled without pity even the female attendants who had waited on Charlemagne in his last illness; he forced his sisters and his cousins to retire to the seclusion of the convent; he condemned all their lovers, as guilty of high treason, either to exile or imprisonment, some of them even to death. By these proceedings he gave a scandalous publicity to the disorders of his family, which had hitherto excited but little attention.

The immense extent of the empire imposed a burden on Louis which he found too heavy for him; and he hastened to lighten its weight by sharing it with his children. He confirmed Bernhard, his nephew, in the possession of the kingdom of Italy; he intrusted the government of Bavaria to the eldest of his sons, and that of Aquitaine to the second; the third was still too young to receive any share of power. The empire of the West, with three subordinate kings on its most exposed frontiers, appeared to be still governed in the same manner as in the time of Charlemagne; and many years elapsed before foreign nations perceived the immense difference between the men of the two generations. The armies of the empire were still as formidable; the neighbouring nations, jealous of each other, were still equally active in keeping a reciprocal watch over each other's movements, in announcing them to the emperor, and in obeying his orders. At the pleas of the kingdom, or national assemblies, which Louis le

Débonnaire convoked very regularly, were to be seen ambassadors from the petty Visigothic princes, who were struggling among the strong holds of the Pyrennees to save some part of Spain from the Musulman yoke; from the duke of Benevento, who sent tribute from Italy to the empire; from all the small Slavonic tribes, whether in Illyria, Bohemia, or Prussia, who sought the protection of the Franks; lastly, from the princes of Denmark, at that time distracted by a civil war and by a disputed succession to the crown. It could never have been imagined by a superficial observer, that this empire, so vast and so formidable, was already nodding to its fall.

One of the defects of Louis's character, was irresolution: he imagined he could correct this, and determine his own wavering intentions, by forming continual engagements; he was constantly disposing of the future; and presently, from some fresh motive, or some new weakness, he altered what he professed to have irrevocably fixed. In 814, he had made a division of his kingdom amongst his children; in 817, he made a second, and assigned a share to each of his three sons; he took back from one the portion he had allotted to him, to give it to another. During the whole course of his reign, he was constantly occupied in rectifying and changing these partitions of territory among his children; then, after causing them to be confirmed by oaths of allegiance, tendered by the people and the clergy, he overthrew all he had appeared to be building up, and thus inspired his subjects with an extreme impatience of his continual vacillations, a distrust of the future, and a discontent, the effects of which he soon experienced; whilst ill-humour succeeded to the gratitude of his sons, who felt more injured when he reclaimed his gifts, than they had been touched or gratified at receiving them.

The person most offended, and not without considerable reason, by the partition of 817, was Bernhard, king of Italy. Towards his uncle he had shown the deference of a vicegerent governing a province in his name; but when Louis granted to his eldest son, Lothaire, the title of emperor, with pre-eminence over the three other kings, Bernhard complained of the injustice done him. Son of an elder brother of Louis, and himself the senior of his cousin Lothaire, the first rank amongst the Frankic princes belonged of right to him; and into his hands the sceptre of the empire should have passed; whether the law of succession, adopted in the present day had been followed, or whether the

preference had been given to the claim of seniority, the very rule by which his uncle had taken precedence of himself. A great number of bishops and of discontented nobles offered their services to Bernhard, to support his just pretensions. The young prince actually assembled troops: his uncle, on his side, summoned soldiers from Germany; but Bernhard, who held a civil war in horror, accepted the first terms proposed to him: he hastened to Châlons to meet his uncle, threw himself at his feet, and begged pardon for his offence.

It was not without reason that Louis received the surname of *Le Débonnaire*: he seemed to be incapable of harbouring a feeling of resentment or of hatred; he often pardoned where it was his duty not to pardon; nevertheless, he committed at this time one of the most odious acts which stain the history of France. Bernhard, whose rights were equal to his own, had acknowledged himself guilty, from sentiments of filial deference alone; he had placed reliance on the promises he had received, and was awaiting an act of oblivion for his preparations for war: instead of a pardon, he received sentence of death upon himself and his principal adherents. It is true that Louis commuted the punishment, ordering only that his eyes should be put out: such a commutation, however, did but increase the cruelty of his punishment. Queen Ermengarde took care that the operation should be performed in so barbarous a manner, that the unhappy Bernhard died three days after from its effects.

Ermengarde, whose motive for depriving Bernhard of life was the wish to divide his inheritance amongst her children, died ere she had had time to reap the benefits of her cruelty, and Louis was not long in filling her place. In the beginning of the year 819, he married the beautiful and ambitious Judith, daughter of the count Guelf, of Bavaria. At an assembly of the most beautiful girls in his empire, which his clergy had advised him to call together, after the example of king Ahasuerus, Louis had distinguished the pre-eminent charms of Judith. The Frankic nation soon found cause to regret that the daughter of count Guelf was endowed with that singular beauty which gave her so absolute an ascendancy over her husband.

It is true, the authority of Louis was by no means without restraints. No monarch of the Franks had more regularly consulted the states, which he convoked twice in the year: but only the great barons amongst the laity and clergy were summoned

upon these expensive journeys; and the dukes and counts, soon perceiving that the principal subjects of discussion were ecclesiastical affairs, and that, in a language which they did not understand, gave up their seats almost entirely to the bishops. The comitiæ of Aix-la-Chapelle, in the year 816, had been entirely occupied in reforming, in conformity with the observances of St. Benedict, the rules relating to canons and canonesses. At that assembled at Attigny, in the month of August, 822, Louis chose that the whole nation should be witness to his penance. He publicly declared that he had sinned against his nephew Bernhard, in suffering him to be treated with so much cruelty; that he had sinned against Adelhard, Walla, against the holy men and the bishops who had been Bernhard's counsellors, and whom he had exiled for taking part in his conspiracy; finally, that he had sinned against the natural sons of his father, when he forced them to enrol themselves members of different religious orders. He entreated pardon for his sins, of those of the prelates in question who were present, and submitted himself to the canonical penances.

At first it was touching to see this profound sentiment of remorse manifested after the lapse of four years, before an entire nation,—this voluntary self-humiliation, in one whom no tribunal could reach. But while remorse in a man possessed of great qualities offers to our admiration the noble triumph of conscience over pride, the repentance of a weak man is tinged with the weakness of his character. While he recalls his past offence, he excites the anticipation that another is at hand. The one accuses himself because he can find no peace within his own breast; the other, because he cannot obtain absolution at the confessional. The former is actuated by the thoughts of those whom he has made wretched, and of the reparation there may still be time to offer them. The latter thinks of nothing but himself, and the tortures with which he is threatened; repentance in him is but a personal calculation; he would fain combine the hopes of the righteous with the advantages of guilt. When the self-humiliation of Louis before the preists at Attigny was beheld by the people, they concluded that he was not so much oppressed by grief, as indifferent to honour; and the nation began to feel that contempt for him, of which he had acknowledged himself deserving.

Other causes soon sprang up to increase this sentiment. On the 13th of June, 823, after a union of four years, Judith bore him

a son, afterwards known by the name of Charles the Bald: but Judith's general conduct, and her familiarity with Bernhard, duke of Septimania, accredited amongst the Franks the idea that this child belonged to the favourite of the empress, and not to her husband. It is at least certain that the absolute power exercised by Bernhard at the court; the deference shown by Louis for the friend of his wife; the trust which he reposed in him in preference to his own sons, of whom he was beginning to be jealous, rendered his government at once ridiculous and contemptible. Judith, who already had it in contemplation to get away from the elder sons of her husband such provinces as might be sufficient to form an appanage for the youngest, seized every opportunity of insulting those princes; and, if they ever betrayed their vexation, she strove to excite the anger and resentment of her husband against them. On occasion of a disastrous campaign, made by Pepin beyond the Pyrennees, she prevailed on Louis to condemn to death two counts who had been the king of Aquitaine's advisers; thus indirectly wounding the honour of the commander-in-chief, the son of her husband. Though the sentence was not carried into execution, it sufficed to give birth to two opposite factions throughout the empire. The people held the emperor guilty, both of the injustice of which he was the immediate cause, and of that, the consequences of which he had endeavoured to mitigate. When once a government has ceased to inspire confidence, the very punishments with which it visits the great for injuries inflicted on the people, are regarded by that people as a fresh abuse of power.

Still the step is wide from these disagreements amongst princes, from these court intrigues, to a civil war. It was not the resentment and disgust excited by the weakness of their father, or the perfidy of their stepmother, in the mind of Lothaire or of Pepin, that influenced the small proprietors, of whom the Frankic armies were exclusively composed, to arm for war at their own expense, and to attack their fellow-countrymen. But disorder was spread throughout the empire. The feebleness of Louis had imboldened several of the enemies of the Franks—the Musulmans, the Bulgarians, the Normans, to ravage the frontiers; in the interior, the oppression exercised by the nobles on the people was daily becoming more intolerable. A frightful traffic in slaves was secretly carried on in all parts of the empire.

The Musulmans have always been accustomed to place great

confidence in the slaves brought up under their own roofs; they make them the guardians of their interests, their soldiers, often their ministers. They regarded it, too, as a work of piety and charity to buy the children of infidels, with the view of converting them to the true faith. They were, therefore, always ready to pay a high price for the Christian children brought to them in Spain or in Africa. From the neighbourhood of Verdun they received more particularly those whom they destined to form the interior guard of their harems. The Jews carried on this horrible trade; and the French nobles, ecclesiastical as well as secular, whenever they chanced to be pressed for money, sold them the children of their serfs, with the full knowledge of their destination. A law passed in the year 829, prohibiting the administration of baptism to the slaves of the Jews, without the consent of their masters, and the violent discussions which it excited in the diet, reveal to us the importance of this nefarious traffic, and the degree of oppression and of misery to which the whole lower class of the population of Gaul was reduced.

The external relations of the empire of the West still seemed worthy of the successor of Charlemagne. Northwards, its frontier extended as far as the Eyder, which still forms the boundary line between the German empire and Denmark. Beyond this river, and throughout Scandinavia, the Danes or Normans, who had afforded refuge to a great number of Saxon fugitives, and had imbibed their hatred of Christianity and of the Frankic sway, began to seek occasion to wreak their vengeance, to display their daring valour, and to gratify their thirst of plunder. Courage was, in their eyes, the first of virtues: the glory of a hazardous expedition was regarded by every family as an inheritance more precious than perishable riches; the young were eager to mark their entry into the world by daring adventures. Not less accustomed to brave the wrath of the tempest than the perils of the fight, they ventured forth on the ocean in small open boats: in these they infested the shores of Germany, of France, and of Great Britain; and extended the predatory warfare in which they gloried, to countries apparently the most secure from their attacks. But these expeditions were not as yet sanctioned by the national government; they were the exploits of adventurers, over whom the king of Denmark had no control. Indeed, at the time in question, that country was distracted by a civil war carried on between several cousins who aspired to the crown. The

pretenders to the kingly dignity referred their claims to Louis le Débonnaire, and wished to make him their arbiter. In the year 826, one of them, called Heriolt,* set out for Mentz, which place the emperor had appointed for their meeting: he was accompanied by his wife and a numerous suite of his countrymen. They all declared themselves ready to embrace Christianity: Louis, consequently, presented Heriolt at the font of the church of St. Alban, where he was baptized; and the empress Judith performed the same office for the queen.

Within the boundaries of Gaul itself the imperial authority was but imperfectly acknowledged by the Bretons and Gascons. These nations, separated by their language from the Franks and the Gauls, submitted to the imperial government when it had sufficient vigour to make them feel that submission was inevitable; but they habitually despised agriculture and every useful art. Whoever did not speak their language was regarded as an enemy; whatever an enemy possessed was looked upon as lawful spoil; and the first symptoms of weakness in their neighbours were watched, as the signal for renewed hostilities and renewed pillage. Mervan and Viomark, who both assumed the title of king of the Bretons, repeatedly forced Louis to take the field; for, though he confided to his representatives the command of more distant wars, he invariably conducted in person those in the interior of Gaul. Lupus Centuli, duke of the Gascons, showed no less obstinacy; his agile hunters of the Pyrennees sallied forth from Béarn and the valley of Soule, and spread terror throughout Aquitaine: they escaped the pursuit even of the cavalry; and, at the very moment when their enemies thought them entrapped, they were far distant.

Beyond the Pyrennees, Alphonso II., surnamed the Chaste, king of Oviedo, (A. D. 791—842,) was carrying on an unequal struggle against Abderrahman, the victorious king of Corduba. (A. D. 822—852.) The former, under whom the half-fabulous hero, Bernardo del Carpio, distinguished himself by his exploits, demanded occasional succours of Louis, and, in return, rendered him occasional homage for the victories he gained in Galicia and the Asturias. The latter hardly noticed this mountain-warfare on the part of a small semi-barbarous nation. He had subdued all the rest of Spain to his government; he had suppressed several revolts in his own family; he had gained some brilliant vic-

* Harold, or Harald, is spelt Heroult by Norman historians.—*Transl.*

tories over the generals of Louis and his son Pepin, king of Aquitaine. He had driven the Franks from the banks of the Ebro, and reconquered from them the county of Barcelona; but his attention had been chiefly turned to the encouragement of agriculture, of commerce, of arts, and letters, in every part of his domains. The population of Moorish Spain was rapidly increasing: her schools acquired celebrity; her scholars multiplied, and her towns and cities began to appreciate the new-felt benefits of civilization and refinement of manners. Abderrahman II. was himself a philosopher, a poet, and a musician; and encouraged by his example and his patronage the studies in which he took an active share. But these pursuits had not the effect of inclining him to renounce the pleasures of the world. Whilst Alphonso II., who, in concert with his wife, had made a vow of monastic chastity, left no children, the philosopher Abderrahman left forty-five sons and forty-one daughters.

Italy was almost exclusively under the government of Lothaire, the eldest son of the emperor. Louis, who showed the most extreme deference to the papal authority, would, perhaps, have contributed to its elevation, in opposition to that of his son, if the lives of the five pontiffs who succeeded each other in the chair of St. Peter, during his reign, had been of longer duration. This rapid succession prevented the church from profiting, by the weakness of the emperor, to grasp at fresh prerogatives. All the other powers subordinate to the throne acquired, however, greater independence. Lothaire, dreading the enmity of his father and his stepmother, thought it expedient to conciliate all his vassals. The dukes who owed him allegiance, richer in wealth and in vassals than the nobles of France, began to look upon themselves as independent princes. The duke of Benevento, the most powerful of all, who, even under Charlemagne, had been a tributary, but never a subject, once more declared war on his own account; a proceeding not yet ventured upon by any other of the great nobles in the Frankic empire. Towards the end of Louis's reign, (A. D. 839,) it is true, this duchy was divided amongst three independent nobles, the princes of Salerno, Benevento, and Capua. But so increased was the population and the wealth of these magnificent tracts of country, that this great fief, even when divided, still ranked amongst the most powerful of the empire. At this same epoch, the republics of Naples, Gaëta, and Amalfi, Greek cities, which took advantage

of the neglect of the emperor of the East, to recover and strengthen their liberty, had rapidly increased in population; their troops were become warlike; and an extensive trade with the Arabs, the Greeks, and the Latins, spread affluence and prosperity within their walls. It is true, the rise of a new power in their neighbourhood inspired them with anxiety: the Saracens had established several military colonies at the mouths of the Garigliano, at Cuma, and at la Licosa.

On the other hand, Venice, which had already existed for several centuries under the protection of the Greek empire, was beginning to emancipate herself entirely from all foreign shackles. In the year 697, the Venetians had modified their constitution by placing a single head with the title of doge, or duke, over the tribunes of the different confederate islands who composed the government. Pepin, son of Charlemagne, had refused to recognise the independence of the Venetians; but their vigorous resistance to his attacks, in the year 809, had established their right of paying no obedience to the head of the Western empire. This event had been followed, at no great distance of time, by the foundation of that city on the island of Rialto, which was destined to become the capital of the republic and the queen of the Adriatic.

Along the whole eastern frontier of the empire there were small Slavonic nations who acknowledged themselves tributary to Louis le Débonnaire. Sometimes their dukes assisted in person at the diets held by the emperor; sometimes they delegated ambassadors. But it not unfrequently happened, that their own fickleness, or the insolence of the commanders on the frontiers, occasioned a petty warfare between them and the empire. Dukes of Pannonia, Dalmatia, Liburnia, the Abodrites, the Soratians, the Witzi, the Bohemians, the Moravians, are mentioned, sometimes amongst the feudatory subjects of the empire, sometimes amongst its enemies; without affording us a possibility of discovering the interests and the alliances of these small barbarian tribes, who often changed both their name and place of abode. On the same frontier, in Hungary and Transylvania, the Huns and Avars, after having resisted the arms of Charlemagne, were become enfeebled by civil dissensions: many of them had embraced Christianity; many had abandoned the country; in short, they were no longer formidable. But, farther to the east, the Bulgarians had raised themselves upon their ruins. This pagan nation, continually at war with the Greeks, inspired universal dread from the ferocity of their manners and

disposition. They did not turn their arms against the empire of the Franks; but several of the smaller Slavonic tribes forsook the alliance of the Franks and sought that of the Bulgarians, and paid tribute to the one or to the other, as they thought they could ensure themselves protection against that neighbour, whom, at the time, they had the most reason to dread. In 824, the deputies of Omortag, king of the Bulgarians, arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle, to demand some settlement of frontiers between themselves and the Franks. The death of Omortag just at the same period interrupted the negotiations.

Peace still subsisted between the empire of the East and that of the West, and the two emperors continued their intercourse by means of embassies: but the simultaneous decay of these two great powers gradually estranged them from each other. In the time of Charlemagne, their territories had touched upon each other throughout the whole line of an extensive frontier; now, they were already separated by several independent or hostile states. The island of Crete had been conquered towards the year 823, by a fleet composed of Ommiad Musulmans from the shores of Andalusia. In 827, Sicily was invaded by a body of Musulmans from Africa, who had been invited to the enterprise by a young Greek who was in love with a nun. Dalmatia and Servia declared themselves independent about the year 826; the latter threw off the yoke of Byzantium, while the Croatsians, their neighbours, withdrew their allegiance from the court of Aix-la-Chapelle.

The revolutions of the Greek empire had been precipitated by the bitterness of the religious hatred existing between the image-worshippers and the iconoclasts. The ambitious Irene, who had re-established the worship of images, and had found in the monks such powerful allies, fell a victim to a conspiracy of the contrary faction, a short time after the negotiations set on foot between herself and Charlemagne, with the view of uniting the two empires by the marriage of their sovereigns. She was surprised and arrested, on the 31st of October, 802, by the orders of Nicephorus, her grand treasurer, who was crowned emperor in her place. She was banished to Lesbos, and left exposed to such abject poverty, that this once powerful and haughty empress was reduced to gain a scanty subsistence by spinning.

The history of Greece at this period has been transmitted to us solely by writers who were ardently devoted to the mainte-

nance of the worship of images against the iconoclasts; and as Nicephorus once more abolished that worship, his reign, from 802 to 811, and that of his son Stauracius, are represented as disgraceful; whilst Michael Rhangabe, who succeeded the latter, (A. D. 811—813,) is painted as an excellent and truly orthodox prince. Nicephorus, it is true, was unsuccessful in the war which he undertook against the Bulgarians; but as he himself was killed in the great battle he fought against them, and his son was mortally wounded, we must at least do justice to their personal courage; while, on the contrary, their successor gave numerous proofs of weakness and incapacity. Michael was unseated by a new revolution, which once more placed the power in the hands of the iconoclasts, and raised Leo the Armenian to the empire. So slight was the alarm with which Michael Rhangabe inspired the new emperor, that he was permitted to retire to a convent, where he survived his deposition thirty-two years.

The Greek emperors contemporary with Louis le Débonnaire, —Leo the Armenian, (A. D. 813—820;) Michael the Stammerer, A. D. 820—829;) and his son Theophilus, (A. D. 829—342,)—persisted in their horror of image-worship; and they are all, in consequence, represented by clerical historians as tyrants. The coronation of Michael the Stammerer, and the death of Theophilus, are equally calculated to strike the imagination. The former, after having been the friend of Leo the Armenian, had repeatedly conspired against him: he had been condemned to be burnt alive, and was imprisoned in a dungeon of the palace. The eve of the day fixed for his execution, his friends, habited as priests and penitents, with swords hidden under their long robes, entered the chapel where the emperor Leo was performing matins, on Christmas-day, and attacked him at the moment he was chanting the first psalm. Leo, who had been a soldier, and who had ascended with glory, step after step, in the career of arms, having no other means of defence, seized a massive cross from the altar, and endeavoured to repulse the assailants, at the same time imploring their mercy. “It is the hour of vengeance, and not of mercy,” was the answer of the conspirators; and he fell beneath their swords.

His prisoner, Michael, was instantly brought from his dungeon, and placed upon the throne, where he received the homage of the nobles of the empire, of the clergy, and the people, be-

fore a smith could be found to take off the fetters which still bound his feet.

His son Theophilus was surnamed by the Greeks the Unfortunate, from his constant want of success in every war he conducted in person, spite of his brilliant valour and great activity. He seems to have united the merits and defects of those eastern despots, whose justice, vigilance, and bravery, historians celebrate; forgetting that the vigour, the promptitude, and arbitrary caprice of their decisions destroy in the people themselves all notions of law and justice; that their vigilance takes the form of vexatious *espionnage*, inspiring their subjects with continual distrust: that their courage, not being enlightened and guided by a regular study of the art of war, serves only to expose their soldiers to danger.

The Greek nation already held but the second rank in the East. The opinions of their neighbours the Musulmans had influenced their morals and their habits; and the emperors of Greece were dazzled by the glory of the khaliphs. Theophilus, the rival of Motassem, the son of Harun al Rashid, seems to have taken the commander of the faithful as his model. The death of Theophilus is even more stamped with the oriental character than his life. He had given his sister in marriage to a brave captain of the ancient race of the Persian kings, Theophobus, who, with a great number of his countrymen, had renounced a country bowed down under the Moslem yoke: he had embraced Christianity, and served in the armies of the empire. He had given his brother-in-law signal proofs of his fidelity, at a period when a numerous faction called upon himself to ascend the throne; and the emperor, attacked, in the flower of youth, by a mortal disease, which, it was evident, would rapidly tear him from his wife and his infant son, and would thus leave them unprotected, might have been expected to rejoice at the prospect of confiding them to the hands of so faithful a guardian as Theophobus. Such, however, would not be the opinion of a Turk of the present day in similar circumstances; neither was it that of Theophilus; for despotism assimilates men of every race and every religion. With feelings of sombre jealousy he reflected that his brother-in-law would survive him. On his death-bed, he gave orders that the head of Theophobus should be brought to him. He grasped it with his expiring hands, and exclaimed, "I recognise thee, my brother, and yet already thou hast ceased

to be Theophobus; soon, too soon, I shall cease to be Theophilus." He then fell back upon his bed, and expired.

During the first sixteen years of the reign of Louis le Débonnaire, frequent embassies between the two empires kept up the remembrance of the ancient unity of the Roman world; and the question of the worship of images was debated afresh in the West, on the invitation of the emperor of the East. But, dating from the year 830, we find the whole attention of the Franks concentrated upon themselves; their relations with foreign powers were dissolved; and the history of the times presents us with nothing but internal dissensions and the quarrels of the Carlovinian family.

At the assembly of the states held at Aix-la-Chapelle in the spring of the year 830, Louis had called together the Frankic army to carry war into Britany. This war, in which the soldiers had no hopes of getting plunder, and in which they knew they must undergo all the inconveniences and dangers of roads fatal to their horses, an unwholesome climate, and great suffering, was regarded with extreme repugnance by the freemen of whom the army was to be composed. This discontent; the ignorance of the freemen, who, in most instances, suffered without understanding the cause of their suffering; the absence of all public opinion; the want of any communication between the provinces which could serve to enlighten them; were so many instruments seized upon by the sons of Louis to incite to revolt; the armies marching under them to the general rendezvous. Pepin, king of Aquitaine, and Louis, king of Bavaria, united their troops at Verberie. Their father, perceiving that he was abandoned by the greater part of his soldiers, resolved on putting himself at the head of those who continued faithful, and marching to Compiègne, three miles distant, where he entered into negotiations with his sons. A promise was immediately exacted from him, that he would dismiss from his court Bernhard, duke of Septimania, the reputed lover of his wife. The empress Judith was conducted to the camp, and confessions corroborative of public suspicions were extorted from her, together with a promise that she would take the veil at the convent of St. Rade-gunde at Poitiers. Judith was so acted upon, either by terror or by repentance, that she entreated the emperor to abdicate the crown, and to retire to a convent; but he refused to bind himself by monastic vows, and demanded time for deliberation. In the

mean time, the aged monarch found himself a prisoner in the hands of his three sons: for Lothaire had arrived from Italy; he had approved every thing done by his two brothers, and was recognised as the head of the malecontent party. It was the wish of the clergy of his party that the emperor should be formally deposed by a national council. But such severity did not appear necessary to his sons, who were not resolved on depriving him of all authority. The feeble Louis had always been led by those about him: henceforward their rivals were removed from his person, and he remained entirely in their hands; they imagined he would submit implicitly to their wishes, while his name, and the respect it still inspired, would be of use, without imposing any restraint upon them.

But jealousy of power aroused the mental energy of the old emperor. He readily gave himself up to a favourite, but that favourite must be of his own choice; and, to regain possession of power, he displayed a degree of address and perseverance which he had never before exhibited. The house of Charlemagne had reached its elevation by the arms of the people of Germany. Charles had lived almost entirely amongst them; and had chosen them exclusively to fill his army and to discharge the most eminent functions both of church and state. The inhabitants of Gaul felt humbled and oppressed: under the reign of Charlemagne they had not dared to make any attempt to free themselves; they were imboldened under that of Louis (of whom, however, they had fewer reasons to complain,) and they took advantage of the dissensions amongst the royal family to shake off this Germanic ascendancy: they united their own cause to that of the malecontent princes, and seconded every attack made upon the imperial authority.

The empire of the West was thus divided between two nations whom their language rendered it impossible to blend, and in whom difference of origin and customs engendered mutual antipathy. On the one side were seen all the inhabitants of either bank of the Rhine, who till that time, had been almost exclusively designated by the name of Franks,* but to whom, at this period, the more generic name of Germans was again beginning to be applied: on the other were found all who made use of the Roman

* It should be remarked, that *Franken* was not the name of a tribe or gens, like *Sachsen* *Bajoaren* (Bayern,) &c. but of an association, originally formed for the deliverance of Germany from the Roman yoke.—*Transl.*

tongue, or the different patois which were already growing out of corrupted Latin; the Gauls, the Aquitanians, the Italians. The Gauls, however, were not willing to renounce their share of the glory which for three centuries had hung around the conquerors of their country; they therefore assumed the name of Franks, and gave to their country that of France. As, however, from the period in question, this name denotes a new language (the same spoken by the French of the present day, as contradistinguished from the Teutonic language of the ancient Franks,) we shall henceforth give to the Gauls, among whom it was in use, the modern name of French.

The aversion of the French, and the attachment of the Germans, to the son of Charlemagne, furnishes an explanation of the long civil wars which troubled the end of the reign of Louis le Débonnaire, and the whole of that of his sons. Louis having succeeded in obtaining that the next assembly of the states should be convoked at Nimeguen, found himself surrounded there by a far larger number of Germans than of French: Lothaire, frightened at the desertion of his partisans, repaired to his father's tent; and whilst his followers, alarmed by the length of the conference, imagined he had met with some violence, and were preparing at the peril of their lives to rescue him by main force, he had effected his reconciliation after the manner of princes:—he sacrificed the men who had exposed themselves for his sake; he accused them as the instigators of all his rebellious acts; and consented to the condemnation of all his friends to death. The good-natured Louis, however, abstained from carrying into execution any one of the sentences pronounced upon them; his sole desire seemed to be to recall his wife from the convent whither she had retired, and to prevail on the church to authorize him in taking her back.

The misfortunes of the aged emperor had had the effect of exciting the enthusiasm of the people, and especially of his own countrymen, bound to him by the tie of a common language. His humility might be extolled by the monks; his clemency and juster claims on universal approbation: but no sooner did he resume the reins of the government, than his incapacity increased the general disorder, and his very virtues became a source of evil to the people. Accordingly, a year had hardly elapsed after power had been restored to him, when discontent burst forth on all sides. Always under the dominion and the guidance of the person most constantly about him, and especially of the em-

press Judith, the most futile motives influenced his most important determinations: he altered the order of the succession to the crown, rather than support for an instant the ill-humour of his wife; he appointed military governors over the largest provinces as the price of a caress, and changed the boundaries of his kingdom in return for the slightest favour. The instability of every established division; the apparent contempt for all settled arrangements; the violation of every oath intended as a guarantee, kept alive the agitation of the people. The sons of Louis, seeing that their interests were incessantly sacrificed to that of their youngest brother, repeatedly endeavoured at resistance, either openly or by intrigue; at last they met in arms in Alsace, in the month of June, 833, with the design of compelling their father to adhere to his own ordinances and his own divisions of territory.

Louis, on his side, advanced as far as Worms to resist them. He was surrounded by numerous prelates, nobles, and soldiers, who inspired him with full confidence; but who, though united under his standard by their sense of allegiance, probably lamented that they were obliged to turn their arms against their fellow-countrymen, merely to abet the ambition of a woman, or to comply with the dotage of a king no longer in a state to know his own will. During the night of the 24th of June, 833, each battalion successively passed over to the camp of the young princes: all the great nobles, all the prelates, and soon after all the courtiers, one after the other, abandoned the old monarch, whose imbecility daily became more evident. The spot where the emperor experienced this universal defection, previously known under the name of the *Rothfeld*, (the red field,) from that time bore the name of *Lügenfeld*, (the field of a lie.) Louis, always eager to submit, dismissed the small number of faithful adherents still attached to him, went in person with his wife and his youngest son to the camp of his eldest sons, and resigned himself to captivity.

The universal defection which took place on the *Lügenfeld* may be considered as a solemn judgment pronounced by the nation on the premature dotage of Louis le Débonnaire. But the resentment of the people is never long-lived; that of the French people, least of all. No sooner was the court which had caused such universal mischief broken up, than the people, led rather by imagination than by reason, felt no other sentiment towards

their old monarch than that of pity for his humiliation; and the sons of Louis were no sooner victorious than they lost all their popularity. They thought they should render their father incapable of ever reascending the throne by a solemn act of degradation, namely, by depriving him of his knightly belt. The bishops, on their side, drew up a general confession, consisting of eight articles, in which Louis was made to accuse himself of numerous crimes, and to declare himself unworthy of the throne. The facile monarch did not hesitate to recite it in the church of Soissons, (November 11, 833.) He afterwards demanded that a public penance should be imposed on him, that he might furnish an example to that people to whom he had been a scandal. With his own hands he unbuckled his knight's belt, and placed it on the altar; then, taking off his accustomed dress, he received from the bishops the dress of a penitent.

The bishops imagined that, after this degrading ceremony, Louis would become an object of contempt in the eyes of all. But the aged emperor had resigned himself to disgrace from a feeling of monk-like humility,—a sentiment in which the people of that day could well sympathize: far from losing any of his partisans by his contrite submission, he only inspired greater pity. The two younger sons of Louis separated from their eldest brother, and complained of the rigour with which their father had been treated; and Lothaire, abandoned by all his partisans successively, was soon reduced to yield to the conditions imposed on him by public opinion.

It is worthy of remark, that these revolutions, so rapidly and frequently occurring, which alternately deprived the emperor or his sons of the sovereign power, and restored it to them, had been hitherto accomplished without any bloodshed. It is true that the princes were backed by armies, but these had appeared to give the law much more by the weight of their opinions than by their arms. The officers and the troops passed judgment on the conduct and the sentiments of their kings. Accordingly, they were constantly negotiating with the opposite camp, and passing without scruple from the one to the other. When a decision was taken, it seemed to be the consequence of the declared and evident unanimity of the nation, to which kings felt obliged to submit. At the beginning of the year 834, Lothaire was recognised sole emperor by the whole army, and by all the provinces: he was master of the persons of his adversaries, Louis,

Judith, and Charles: in less than two months he abandoned all these advantages, without even drawing his sword to defend them. In the early days of March, he set at liberty his father, who was at the convent of St. Denis; he took no measures to keep the empress and her son in his power; he fled from Paris, and retired to Vienne upon the Rhone, where he endeavoured to assemble his partisans. Dating from this time, and during the last six years of the reign of Louis le Débonnaire, it is true the quarrels of his family were more often disgraced by bloodshed; still they were not marked by any great battle, nor by any exploit demanding our attention. No civil wars present a more degrading spectacle, or one more disgraceful to the human race, than those of the Carlovingian family: they call forth neither great virtues, great talents, nor great passions; they do not even display great crimes; but every class in the state, every portion of society, seems struck with a mortal languor.

The death of Pepin, king of Aquitaine, which took place at Poitiers on the 13th of December, 838, changed the politics of Louis, or rather those of the ambitious Judith, who absolutely directed his councils. Pepin, the second of the emperor's sons, left two sons and two daughters. According to a division of the kingdom, sanctioned by the monarch and the nation, the crown of Aquitaine passed of right to the elder son; but Louis immediately took the determination of despoiling his grandson in favour of his son by Judith; and he consecrated the remnant of a life now drawing to a close, to the conduct of this unnatural war, whilst the Aquitanians generously embraced the defence of the son of the king whom he had given them. On the other hand, though Lothaire, the emperor's eldest son, was the one of the three who had caused him the most vexation, Judith, judging that his protection would be the most useful to Charles the Bald, sought to effect her reconciliation with him at any price. She, accordingly, entered into an agreement with him, that Bavaria alone should be given up to the emperor's third son, who, like his father, was named Louis, and that the whole remaining empire should be divided between Lothaire and Charles. Such was the price of the reconciliation between the two emperors, proclaimed at the diet of Worms, on the 30th of May, 839.

While these dissensions were passing within, the increasing weakness and universal anarchy which they occasioned, left the empire a prey to the attacks of all its neighbours. Those on the

Slavonic frontier, now neighbours only to Louis of Bavaria, were already forgotten by the French. The record of no single event has come down to us, of all that passed throughout that long eastern frontier which Louis le Débonnaire had defended in the beginning of his reign. But it was by sea that the barbarians now gained entrance into France; and, on this element, none dreamed of repelling them. Every year the Northmen pushed their ravages farther on every shore of the ocean. The Mediterranean coasts were also beginning to suffer from the devastating incursions of the Saracens: a body of the latter, in 838, surprised and pillaged Marseilles, the most opulent of the cities of the south; while others of their countrymen established themselves in southern Italy.

At last Louis le Débonnaire, who had grown old both in mind and body long before the appointed period of man's decline, was attacked, towards the beginning of June, in the year 840, with water on the chest. By his own command, he was transported to the palace of Ingelheim, built on an island in the Rhine, above Maintz: there he still displayed that monk-like piety, sometimes touching, but always weak, which had conciliated the love of the people, notwithstanding the ignominy of his reign. His natural brother, Drogo, bishop of Metz, attended him in his last moments, and prevailed on him to extend his forgiveness to every one, even to Louis of Bavaria, his third son, at that time in arms against him, and whom he accused of bringing his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. When he was on the point of expiring, he was twice heard to exclaim in the German tongue, "Aus! aus!"—"Out! out!" as if exhorting his soul to burst forth from its terrestrial abode. But it was the belief of his attendants that these words were addressed to the devil, whom he beheld at his window. "For, with his company," says the chronicle of St. Denis, "he had naught to do, either dead or alive. Then he turned his face to the right side; raised his eyes toward heaven, and in this manner he passed from this mortal life to the joys of paradise, June 28, 840."

CHAPTER XIX.

Division of the Empire into distinct States.—Rapid Degeneracy of the Carolingian Race.—Successors to Louis le Débonnaire.—Charles the Bald.—Government of the French Monarchy.—French and German Languages.—Battle of Fontenai.—Defeat of Lothaire and Pepin.—Partition of the Empire.—Peace.—Incursions of the Northmen on the Coasts of France.—Their Bravery and Love of Plunder.—Oscar.—Pillage of Rouen.—Pusillanimity of the People.—Rægnar Lodbrog.—Flight of Charles the Bald and his Court.—Sack of Paris.—Hastings.—Defenceless State of France.—Attacks of the Saracens and Moors on Rome and Naples.—Sack of Marseilles by Greek Pirates.—Burning of Bordeaux by the Normans.—Sack of Aix-la-Chapelle, Trèves, and Cologne.—State of the Population of France.—Devastation of Normandy.—Second Sack of Paris.—Cowardice and Decay of the French Nobility.—Increasing Wealth and Power of the Church.—Conduct of the Clergy.—Trial by Ordeal.—Superior Power of the Bishops in France, of the Dukes in Italy, of the People in Germany.—Division of the Kingdom of France among the three Sons of Lothaire.—His Abdication and Death.—Division of the States of Charles the Bald.—Marriage of Lothaire the Younger and Theutberge.—Violent Opposition of the Clergy to their Divorce.—Appeal to Pope Nicholas I.—Lothaire's Journey to Rome.—His Reception by Adrian II.—Adrian's Denunciations.—Death of Lothaire and his Companions. A. D. 840—869.

So far as we have been able to penetrate the obscurity of the ages which have just passed in review before us, we have beheld all the nations of the West subjected to common revolutions, hurried along in a like career; we have seen them combining, first under the Romans, then under the Franks, and under the Arabs, towards the formation of a universal monarchy. It was sufficient, with a view to render intelligible the general course of the nations of Europe, to fix our attention on a single empire, and to follow out the relations either of its parts with the whole, or of its enemies with the one dominant and united state.

In the middle of the ninth century the scene changes. The partition of the West among the sons of Louis le Débonnaire gave birth to independent states; to nations of strange language, laws, manners, and opinions, which we see keep their ground in Europe. The period on which we are now about to enter, calamitous in many points of view, shameful and degrading to subjects and to kings, was yet, after long anarchy, productive of the most important and beneficial results;—the birth of popular rights and institutions. This we are about to witness; and it is the final act of the grand drama which it was our design to exhibit to our

readers. But no small number of years were required for the completion of this act: long efforts, pertinacious struggles, were needed to change all the opinions of men; to turn the course of their affections; to detach them from the body of which they had always learned to consider themselves as forming a part, and to persuade them that they formed a whole of themselves.

Long after the power of Charlemagne and his descendants had ceased, the recollection, or the idea, of the empire still dwelt in the minds and the memories of the people of the West. Long after independent sovereigns, a difference of language, an opposition of interests, had detached the Franks, the Germans, the Italians, from each other, and broken again into many fragments their newly formed monarchies, the three nations continued to regard each other as fellow-countrymen; all their sovereigns continued to take the title of Frank princes, and to think themselves qualified candidates for all the crowns of the West indifferently. The revolution which separated the members of the empire began in the year 840, at the death of Louis le Débonnaire; in 987 it was scarcely accomplished, when Charles of Lorraine, brother of Louis V., the last of the Carlovingian line, was deprived of the throne in the last of the kingdoms which had remained subject to his family.

Among the causes which precipitated the fall of this mighty body, we must, doubtless, place in the foremost rank, the incapacity of its rulers. The degeneracy of the Carlovingian race is one of the most striking examples of that rapid deterioration of the species which menaces royal families, and which seems an almost inevitable consequence of the seductions with which absolute power surrounds them. When these families attain to the possession of absolute power in a semi-barbarous age; when the fathers have not endeavoured to correct in their children, by the most careful education, the disadvantages of their situation; when the culture of the mind, of letters, and of morals, do not give a new direction to the activity of those who seem to have nothing left to wish or to aspire after, the successive occupants of the throne can have no other thought than that of enjoying the sensual pleasures placed within their reach by the success of the founders of their dynasty: they are corrupted by all the vices which power and riches can minister to; corrupted by the absence of all obstacle and all restraint, which, of itself, is often sufficient to turn the strongest head; corrupted, often, by the

false direction given to their superficial studies, or by the false aspect under which religion is presented to them, as a means of expiating the vices she fails to prevent.

The Carlovingian family, which was divided into so many branches, which occupied for nearly a century all the thrones of Europe, and which exercised so decisive an influence over the calamities of that quarter of the globe, had, at its rise, produced a series of great men; Pepin of Heristal, Charles Martel, Pepin the Short, Charlemagne: never had so many able and distinguished leaders been seen to succeed each other in a right line. It must, however, be remarked, that the earlier among them were little more than party chieftains, or commanders of armies; and that even the last-mentioned was not born in a royal station. On the contrary, dating from the revolution which placed them on the throne, all the sons and grandsons of these heroic ancestors; all those princes, lapped from their birth in the purple of the Western empire, were, without a single exception, despised and despicable. In the second generation, even, we do not find one deserving of interest, or capable of exciting affection; and the annihilation of the strength of their immense empire, its rapid fall,—without precedent or parallel in the world,—was the work of their vices and their imbecility.

Louis le Débonnaire had, indeed, paved the way towards this enfeeblement of the Carlovingian race. With extensive acquirements, goodness of heart, and amiable qualities, which were mistaken for virtues, he ruined, in a few years, the magnificent inheritance he had from his heroic predecessors. Seduced by the intrigues of his second wife, and by his foolish partiality for his youngest son, he overthrew the laws of the empire, and those which he had himself enacted; confounded all rights, and rendered the duties of the people unintelligible by contradictory obligations; taught his sons and his subjects to violate the treaties and the oaths he exacted from them, and which he himself violated; and thus rendered necessary a civil war after his death, to regulate, by force of arms, what he had thrown into confusion by his infirmness and vacillation.

At the moment of his death, Louis le Débonnaire had not one of his children near him. His eldest son, Lothaire, governed Italy with the title of emperor; the second, Pepin, was dead, and his son, Pepin II., was acknowledged king by a part of Aquitaine; the third, Louis, called from that time the Germanic,

reigned in Bavaria; the fourth, Charles, was at Bourges, endeavouring to induce the Aquitanians to recognise him as their sovereign. The claims of these four princes, the eldest of whom wanted to remain head of the monarchy, as his father and grandfather had been, not one of whom was contented with the portion allotted to him, could only be adjusted by a higher tribunal—either the voice of the whole nation, or the decision of the sword, which in public and in private quarrels was thought to pronounce the judgment of Heaven. The four princes prepared to submit their claims to both: but their respective rights were so confused; their interests were so ill understood, even by themselves; the alliances they might have been able to contract were in a state of so little forwardness, that they were not ready either to plead or to fight. A national diet had been convoked at Worms, even before their father's death: they did not attend it. They assembled their armies, though their armies were, as yet, little disposed to take the field.

The youngest son of Louis, Charles the Bald, was only seventeen years old. He had done nothing, nor certainly did he ever do any thing, which could justly endear him to the people. The right which he claimed to strip Pepin II., to invade the possessions of his elder brothers, or to render himself independent of the head of his family, could be founded only on those feminine intrigues to which he owed his elevation, or on the fondness of a father who had sunk into dotage. These same intrigues had for ten years past involved the nation in scandalous intestine wars, the very memory of which was, one would think, sufficient to alienate the affections of the people from the young man who had been made the cause of so many miseries. Spite of all these disadvantages, Charles's cause was maintained with constancy, with pertinacity, and he triumphed. The consequences of his success may perhaps contribute to enlighten us as to its causes. With the reign of Charles the Bald commenced the real French monarchy; or the independence of that nation which created the language still spoken in France: it was the epoch of the separation of that country from Germany and Italy. The war of Charles against his two brothers was maintained by the Gaulish people; or rather, by the nobles of Roman extraction, who wished to shake off the German yoke. The insignificant quarrel of the kings was taken up with ardour, because it was identified with the quarrel of the races; and all the hostile prejudices which always

attach to differences of language and of manners, gave obstinacy and bitterness to the combatants.

The first conquests of the Franks had scattered the two tongues, the Teutonic and the Latin, throughout the whole extent of Gaul. The barbarian and the Roman had each his dialect: the one had been reserved for the army, the other for the church and the government. All the nobles and great men spoke both languages indifferently; but in the south, the Latin, which daily became more and more corrupt, and which began to be designated by the name Roman or Romanz, was the mother tongue: German was the taught language. The reverse of this was the case in the north. The revolution which had transferred the whole power to the dukes of Austrasia, the ancestors of Charlemagne, and their armies, had diffused the German language over the south, and had rendered it absolutely necessary for those connected with the government to acquire it; but at the same time the seat of the court had been transferred to the Germanic provinces—to Aix-la-Chapelle, Worms, Cologne; and Paris, formerly the capital of the kingdom, had become more and more attached to the Roman language, in proportion as it was more and more deserted by the Franks. At the time of the death of Louis le Débonnaire, the frontier line between the region of the two languages was pretty much what it is at present. It was the boundary which, in his last partition treaty, that emperor had sought to establish between the government of Lothaire and that of Charles. For the first time since the fall of the Roman empire, all who spoke the Roman dialect of France were united into one single body; for the first time they could express their sentiments of dislike to those barbarians who affected to be their masters, and whom their language alone sufficed to prove of another race. The young man whom fortune gave them as a leader, showed, ere long, how little he deserved their attachment or their sacrifices: but if they could have been induced to abandon him, they would certainly never abandon themselves.

A whole year was spent by the four princes in assembling their armies, in strengthening the attachment of their partisans and in binding themselves by mutual alliances. Thus Lothaire promised his support to the youthful Pepin, while Louis the Germanic became the ally of the young Charles. After many skirmishes between the several parties, the four princes at length marched in the direction of the centre of France, about the close of the spring

of the year 841. Louis and Charles then sent a message to Lothaire and Pepin to this effect: that they must choose whether they would accept their last propositions, or await them in the field; for that, on the morrow, the 25th of June, at the second hour of the day, they would come to demand the decision of Almighty God, to which those princes had forced them to appeal against their will.

In this spirit was fought the battle of Fontenai, the most bloody and furious conflict which had taken place in the civil wars of France for many years. A contemporary Italian writer affirms, that the loss of Lothaire and Pepin amounted to forty thousand men: this calculation is most likely exaggerated; it is a more probable supposition that forty thousand men was the amount of the loss on both sides; for the conquerors, Louis and Charles, suffered little less than the conquered. Even this number is doubtless very large, but it betrays a great ignorance either of the moral causes which govern great states, or of the habitual effect of war on population, to attribute, as has often been done, to this carnage alone, the ruin of the Frankic empire.

The terrible battle of Fontenai did not give a sufficiently decided advantage to one party over the other, to occasion an immediate occupation of new provinces, or a change in the respective forces of the two leagues. Each people, and each prince, while bewailing their respective losses, began to think seriously of the means of preventing the recurrence of a similar calamity, the rather, as the empire was at the same time devastated by other enemies. The people, the dukes, the prelates, demanded peace with the utmost urgency; the princes felt the necessity of sincerely and earnestly endeavouring to obtain it. Lothaire was the first who sent to propose to his brothers a treaty of peace, of which he consented to admit, as the basis, the independence of their kingdoms of his imperial crown. Italy, Bavaria, and Aquitaine were to be considered as the hereditary portions, respectively, of Lothaire, of Louis, and of Charles; for Pepin II. was unconditionally abandoned by his uncle, who had promised to protect him. After severing these three kingdoms from the mass, the remainder was to be divided into three equal parts, of which Lothaire, as elder, was to have his choice. Although these primary conditions were agreed on, and the three brothers had held an amicable conference, in the middle of June, 842, in a little island in the Saône above Maçon, a long time was still required before

their commissaries could come to an understanding. They soon began to discover that they had not sufficiently exact information as to the extent or the comparative riches of the several provinces of the empire, to make an equal division of them. They had no geographical maps, no statistical tables to refer to, and were compelled to see every thing with their own eyes. They then asked for assistants, till at length the total number of commissaries amounted to three hundred.

They allotted out among themselves the whole surface of the empire, and they engaged to traverse it in every direction, and to make a complete report upon it before the August of the following year. On this report, the final division of the empire of Charlemagne was decided on in the month of August, 843. All that part of Gaul situated to the west of the Meuse, the Saône, and the Rhône, with the part of Spain lying between the Pyrennees and the Ebro, were abandoned to Charles the Bald. This constituted the new kingdom of France.

The whole of Germany, to the Rhine, was allotted to Louis the Germanic. Lothaire united to Italy the whole eastern portion of France, from the sea of Provence to the mouths of the Rhine and the Scheldt. This long and narrow strip, which cut off all communication between Louis and Charles, and which included all the countries speaking German in the interior of Gaul, was called Lotharingia, or the portion of Lothaire; whence the German Lothringen, and the French Lorraine.

The motive which had mainly determined the Carlovingian princes to put an end to the war, and to lend an ear to the universal complaints of their subjects, was the invasion of the coasts of France and Germany by adventurers from the North, who were called Northmen, (*Nordmänner*,) or Danes; and who returned each succeeding year in greater numbers, and renewed their ravages on the defenceless countries. It was not from the small kingdom of Denmark alone that these formidable swarms issued forth: the whole of Scandinavia, all the shores of the Baltic sea, all the regions lying along the rivers which empty themselves into the sea, furnished recruits to these bands of sea-robbers. It was a new direction which the migration of the northern hordes had taken: instead of advancing across the continent, they poured down upon the coasts. They fancied they acquired a double glory—as they incurred a double danger—in braving the tempests of the north in their frail barks, before they en-

countered the enemies whom they went in search of. Without any other pretext for war than the love of plunder; without any other offence, on the part of those they attacked, than their riches, they still imagined that they were in quest of honour as well as of booty; and if they lost thousands of men annually by storms at sea and combats on shore, their population increased with a rapidity commensurate with the drain upon it, and the numbers of the Norse invaders seemed to multiply with their perils and disasters. In the year 841, Oscar, duke of the Northmen or Danes, ascended the Seine as far as Rouen, took and pillaged that great city, to which he set fire on the 14th of May, and continued to lay waste and plunder the banks of the Seine during a fortnight. Not an individual appeared to resist him. The inhabitants of the country were confounded in one common state of degradation and servitude with the cattle, which aided them in their labours; those of the towns were vexed, oppressed, and unprotected: all were disarmed; all had lost the requisite determination, as well as physical strength, to defend their lives as well as the slender remnant of property which the nobles had left them. The monks, who had already got the greater part of the soil into their hands, and who had mainly contributed to the complete decline of the military spirit, thought of nothing but how to hinder the relics, which they regarded as the treasures of their convent, from falling into the hands of the pagan invaders; and as, in the finest provinces of France, there was not a single spot within thirty leagues of the coast, in which they could think themselves in safety, they bore them in procession farther into the country.

Every one of the following years was marked by some expedition equally disastrous to France, and by the pillage of some great city. Nantes, Bordeaux, and Saintes, fell successively into the hands of the Normans. The ancient walls of the cities appear to have been totally abandoned; nor, indeed, could they have afforded any protection to citizens so debased and disheartened; who, instead of attempting to defend themselves, flocked, together with their priests, into the churches, where they suffered themselves to be butchered without resistance. In 845, Rægner, duke of the Northmen, entered the mouth of the Seine with a hundred barks, and ascended the river with matchless audacity, laying waste both banks in his passage, though Charles, with his army, was then encamped on the right bank.

Paris, which had been the capital of the Merovingian kings, had lost that prerogative under the Carlovingian dynasty. But that great city was still more important than any of those which had fallen to the lot of Charles the Bald; was adorned with a greater number of churches and of convents than any other; and, in the midst of the universal misery, she boasted the immense treasures collected in her churches. When Charles learned the approach of the Northmen, who had encountered no obstacle or resistance, he left the citizens exposed to all the horrors which threatened them: while he and his nobles established themselves in the convent of St. Denis, with a view to defend that sanctuary; and the servants of the church of St. G  n  vi  ve hastened to carry off the relics and the treasures of the saint to a remote farm which belonged to them.

R  gner, continuing his passage up the Seine, arrived before Paris on Holy Saturday, the 28th of March, 845. The city was deserted: all the inhabitants had fled. The Northmen experienced no resistance; yet they massacred or hanged, in sight of the king's army and as a mark of their contempt for him, all the unhappy fugitives who fell into their hands.

At the same time, without hastening, or without appearing to apprehend the slightest danger from their delay, they loaded their vessels with all the wealth they found remaining in Paris,—even to the timber of the houses or the churches which they thought applicable to the purposes of ship-building; while the grandson of Charlemagne, having neither courage to fight himself, nor finding any in the nobles by whom he was surrounded, bargained with the Northmen for the price of their departure, and, at length, promised them seven thousand pounds' weight of silver.

A new leader of the Norse warriors, Hastings, who for thirty years led them on to victory, and who, above any other, contributed to reduce the fertile coasts of France and of England to a depopulated waste, began, about this time, to acquire celebrity. It is asserted that he was born among the most barbarous of the peasants of the diocess of Troyes; but that, finding it impossible to endure the state of oppression to which he saw himself and those around him condemned, he had fled to the pagans of the North, embraced their religion, adopted their manners and their language, and distinguished himself by so much ability and daring, that he rapidly rose to consideration among them, and at length became their leader. Their cupidity was actively second-

ed by his thirst of vengeance, which he wreaked with peculiar fury on the nobles and the priests. Thus it was, that the execrable administration of the empire had brought about the almost universal extinction of resolution and energy in the people; and if, by any accident, one escaped the poisonous influence of slavery, he turned against society those qualities, which, under good government, would have made him its most valuable defender, and now rendered him its most terrible scourge.

The Carlovingian princes, far from occupying themselves with the means of defending their subjects, recalled from the mouths of rivers the coast-guards stationed there by Charlemagne, to employ them against each other; for, in the midst of the general devastation, their civil wars continued; and Charles, the most exposed of them all to the incursions of the Normans, seemed to have no other object in view but to rob his nephew Pepin II. of Aquitaine.

Mean while barbarians of every clime and region seemed to have learned that the Franks might be attacked with impunity at every point. The Saracens of Africa began to ravage the south, in the same manner as the Normans had devastated the west. In the month of April, 846, a mixed body of Arabs and Moors ascended the Tiber, took possession of the church of St. Peter of the Vatican, which was at that time without the walls of Rome, carried off the altar placed over the tomb of the apostle, together with all the ornaments and treasures of the church, and then turned their course towards Naples. At the same time Louis the Germanic, who had tried to repel an invasion of the Slavonians, had been defeated, less from the bravery of his enemies than from the dissensions of his own troops.

The progress of cowardice and debasement among the sons of Charlemagne's soldiers,—among the French, in whom courage seems generated by the very air they breathe,—is one of the most remarkable phenomena, but also one of the best attested, of the age we are contemplating: it proves to what a degree slavery can annihilate every virtue, and what a nation may become in which one caste arrogates to itself the exclusive privilege of bearing arms. Of all the cities built on the shores of the Mediterranean, Marseilles was the most opulent, the most populous, and the most important as a commercial town. Marseilles was taken, in 848, by the refuse of Europe,—a handful of Greek pirates, who landed without resistance, and, after sacking the city,

retired with impunity. At the same time, the Northmen took possession of Bordeaux, which they gave up to the flames.

The cities of Friesland and Flanders in Lothaire's domains were no better defended. The walls of St. Omer alone inspired some confidence, and the relics and conventual wealth of the whole province were, consequently, brought thither for security. Experience had too clearly shown that these sacred treasures did not defend themselves from the insults or the rapacity of the pagans; yet the popular faith in them continued unshaken.

The princes and the governors of provinces not only opposed no resistance to their enemies, but frequently invited them, and employed their arms to intimidate domestic foes, or to avenge pretended offences. Nomenoé, duke of the Bretons, is accused of having repeatedly introduced the Normans into the region lying between the Loire and the Seine. Pepin II. of Aquitaine, and William, son of Bernhard, duke of Septimania, were not more scrupulous in calling in the Saracens: they introduced them not only along the whole marches of Spain, and in Septimania or Languedoc, but even into Provence. In an age which is called religious, the crime, in a Christian, of delivering up his country to pagans or to Musulmans, seemed of a deeper dye than that of betraying it to an ordinary enemy: and yet, never did the princes or powerful men hesitate to commit it, if it promised to afford a means of gratifying their ambition or their vengeance. Scarcely was there an individual among the distinguished persons of this age who did not enter into some disgraceful treaty with the enemies of his faith.

In the early part of the autumn of 851, a fleet of two hundred and fifty large Danish boats appeared off the coast of France, and, dividing themselves into parties at the mouths of the rivers, ascended at the same time the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Seine. One of the divisions reached Aix-la-Chapelle, and no attempt was made to defend the ancient capital of Charlemagne,—the capital of Lothaire: the imperial palace was burned by the northern pirates, and the richest convents were given over to pillage. Nor was this all: this band of hardy adventurers, daring at once the power of France and that of Germany, pursued their route to Trèves and Cologne, massacred almost all the inhabitants of these two celebrated cities, and set fire to their buildings.

Another division, after leaving their boats at Rouen, had advanced by land as far as Beauvais, and had spread deso-

lation throughout the adjacent country. The Danes passed two hundred and eighty-seven days in the country lying on the Seine; and when they quitted it, with their ships laden with the spoil of France, it was not to return home, but to transfer the scene of their depredations to Bordeaux. Yet, we do not hear what either Lothaire or Charles the Bald were doing during this period; nor why those nobles who had reserved to themselves the exclusive right of bearing arms, could not draw a sword in defence of their country. Those ambitious chiefs, who had destroyed at once the power of the king and of the people, seemed now to rival each other only in abject pusillanimity.

Europe still contained a great number of veteran warriors, who had beheld Charlemagne master of an empire which extended from the shores of the Mediterranean to those of the Baltic, and from the Krapack mountains to the ocean. No unforeseen calamity had befallen that vast empire; no powerful nation, no confederation of various tribes, had taken arms against it: it had fallen by the vices of its government alone. Never were the French summoned by the public authority to take arms, except for the purpose of slaughtering each other in the name and on the behalf of royalty. The nations united under the sceptre of Charlemagne were regarded by his descendants as a numerous herd, which they shared among them in the most capricious manner, without the least regard to the interests of the people, or the means of defending the states. The race of freemen, already exhausted by Charlemagne's wars, had become extinct under the feeble reigns of Louis le Débonnaire and of his son. The inhabitants of the towns, despised, ruined, disarmed, were no longer possessed of any means of defence. Gaining an humble subsistence by a few of the mechanical trades, or living on the charity of the monks, they were not in a condition to inspire the nobles with any jealousy: nevertheless, these overbearing lords were indignant that men of such low birth and menial occupations should not be slaves; and, far from protecting them, they delighted in their sufferings and misfortunes. Hence the walls of the cities were suffered to go to decay; their civic guard or militia had ceased to assemble; the treasury of their municipal courts was empty; their magistrates commanded no respect. The largest cities were considered only like villages, as the dependency of the neighbouring castle; and when a handful of pirates appeared before their gates, and threatened them with pillage, slavery, and death, the citi-

zens knew of no other resource than to fly to the foot of the altar, or to the protection of the church, where the brutality of the conquerors soon overtook them. The rural population, reduced to the most abject state of slavery, and become almost indifferent to life, were hunted like wild beasts by the Normans and the Saracens, and perished by thousands in the woods. They had no heart to till or sow the fields they had so little hope of reaping; and every year brought with it a fresh pestilence or famine.

“The cities of Beauvais and Meaux are taken,” wrote Emenarius, a contemporary historian; “the castle of Melun is devastated; Chartres is taken; Evreux is sacked; Bayeux and all the cities of that district are invaded; not a hamlet, not a village, not a convent, remains untouched; every one takes to flight; for rarely, indeed, do we find any one who dares to say, stay, resist, fight for your country, for your children, for the honour of your race.” The Normans took advantage of this universal cowardice; and on the 28th of December, 856, they sailed up the Seine as high as Paris, which they entered and began to pillage. They first set fire to the churches of St. Peter and St. Génévieve; they then pillaged and burned all the others, with the exception of three, which were ransomed by a large sum of money.

“Who would not be afflicted,” cries Aimoin, a contemporary monk of St. Germain des Près, “to see the army put to flight before the battle has begun? to see it terrified before the first arrow has flown? to see it overthrown before the shock of bucklers? But the Normans had perceived, during their sojourn at Rouen, that the lords of the country (we cannot say it without a profound grief of heart) were cowardly and fearful in battle.”

The same author, in another place, introduces duke Rægner Lodbrog rendering an account to Horic, king of Denmark, of the taking of Paris. “And he related to him,” says he, “how good and how fertile, and how filled with all good things he found the country; and how base and trembling the people who inhabited it were in the moment of the fight. He added, that in this country the dead had more courage than the living; and that he had met with no other resistance than that which had been opposed to him by an old man called Germain, long since dead, whose house he had entered.” Such is the antithesis by which Aimoin introduces the recital of a miracle of St. Germain, who drove the Norse pirate out of his temple.

The immense growth of priestly power and influence, during the reign of the Carolingian sovereigns, was not one of the least among the causes of the universal decay of the Western empire, and the extinction of its military spirit. The importance of the priesthood had increased, not only by the increase of their numbers and their wealth, but by the progressive weakness of the other orders of the state.

For four centuries the most distinguished families of the Franks,—those who began to be considered superior to the others in blood as well as in riches, and who were called the nobility,—had become rapidly extinct; sometimes from the fury of foreign and domestic wars; sometimes from unbridled debauchery, (the sole enjoyment of the rich in a barbarous state of society;) or, lastly, from devotion, which, suddenly succeeding to the grossest licentiousness, consigned those to the walls of a convent who ought to have perpetuated their race.

The chasms caused by the extinction of these noble families were not filled by a succession of new families raised from the inferior ranks; there was scarcely any communication between the different classes of society, nor was any gradual approximation possible. When an opulent family became extinct, a part of its property went by inheritance to some other family already possessed of large landed property; so that the estates of the remaining families became more and more extensive. The rest, often the largest part, according to the degree of piety of the testator, went to the church; and this church, which was incessantly acquiring, and had no power of alienating, saw the boundaries of the lands over which she claimed a right, enlarging with every succeeding generation, nay, with every succeeding year. It is impossible to read the early French chronicles without being struck with the progressive diminution of the number of personages they introduce on the stage. The farther we advance, the more are we surprised to see all the nobles,—we might almost say all the citizens,—of a great kingdom, of whom we have obtained any knowledge, dwindle away to four or five counts and as many abbots.

As we continue our researches, we soon remark that the abbots gradually hold a larger place in history than the counts. The ecclesiastical benefices were become too rich not to excite the ambition and cupidity of the most powerful lords. As the same families furnished recruits both to the army and the church, it

sometimes happened that the abbots vied with the counts in ferocity, brutality, and debauchery. It was, however, more common to see the most thoughtful, sedate, and crafty youth of a family destined to the ecclesiastical profession; so that, with an ambition equal to that of the soldiers, the priests had a greater chance of success. When they met their brothers in the council, they would, of course, be superior to them in policy and in cunning. They had nearly succeeded in excluding them from the assemblies of the field of May, which they had converted into councils: they shared with them the command of the armies; for the abbots and prelates, disregarding the sacred canons, had arrogated to themselves the right of wielding the sword. They, however, generally felt that they were ill qualified for the profession of arms; and this diffidence of their military talents naturally led them to give a constant preference to negotiations over force; to neglect all that would have conduced to foster a warlike spirit among their vassals; and rather to enervate the population in every district which fell into their hands.

In the domains of the church,—and those domains perhaps then embraced more than half the territory of the Western empire,—all the influences of habit, of example, of education, were exerted to extinguish the national courage. It was to the protection of relics and sanctuaries, never to that of their own right arm, that the faithful were exhorted to recur in all seasons of danger. Trial by battle gave place to ordeals quite as absurd and quite as dangerous,—those of fire and of boiling water, for instance,—but which did not tend to excite a warlike spirit among the vassals of the church. Military games and exercises were even forbidden, as profane shows little suitable for Christians.

Among the laity, talents found no reward, ambition had no object; all individuality of character was obliterated, and a moral lethargy seemed to have taken possession of the nobility, attenuated as it was in number and in influence. But the clergy had gathered the inheritance of all the secular passions, as well as of all the means of gratifying them: they united sacred learning to policy, and secured to those who distinguished themselves by their talents, their knowledge, or their character, an influence, a power, a glory, far superior to any that could have been acquired by the same individuals in ages the most favourable to letters.

It must be observed, however, that the three portions of Charlemagne's empire had not experienced a fate precisely similar. France, under Charles the Bald, had fallen into the power of the bishops: the nobility was feeble; the army spiritless; the rural population almost annihilated. In Italy, under Lothaire and his son, Louis II., the prelates had not succeeded in gaining possession of so large a share of influence, or so large an extent of territory: but powerful dukes had established vast and wealthy governments, which they had rendered almost hereditary in their families; and though the country did not prosper under their administration, they had maintained a free and martial population in their castles and strong places, and some opulence in the cities. Lastly, Germany, under Louis the Germanic, had preserved more of a military spirit than either of the other two divisions; a population proportionally more numerous, and more freemen in proportion to the serfs. Thus France was become a theocracy, Italy a confederation of princes, and Germany an armed democracy.

It appears to us, that our readers would find little interest and less profit in a catalogue of the family wars which troubled this period. Charles the Bald, who never defended his states from aggression, was incessantly occupied in endeavours to wrest Aquitaine from his nephew, Pepin II.; nor did he keep the peace better with his brothers Lothaire and Louis the Germanic, nor with their sons: but these wretched struggles, though sufficient to ruin provinces, did not deserve to be considered as national wars. They had no political results, save that of adding to the general stock of misery; and made no change in the distribution of empires.

In the beginning of the year 855, the emperor Lothaire, then about sixty years of age, was attacked by a slow fever, from which he was sensible he should never recover. He divided his states among his three sons, then of mature age. To Louis II. he gave Italy, with the title of emperor; to Lothaire II. the provinces situated between the Meuse and the Rhine, which had long been known under the name of Austrasia, but which were now called Lothringen, or Lorraine, from the names of their sovereigns. Charles, the youngest son, had the provinces lying between the Rhine and the Alps, which were then called the government of Provence. After making this partition, the emperor Lothaire assumed the monkish habit, in the abbey of Prom,

in the Ardennes, where he died on the 28th of September, 855. It appears that Charles the Bald had, on his side, given the titles of kings of Neustria and of Aquitaine to his two sons; and Louis the Germanic, those of kings of Bavaria, Saxony, and Swabia, to his three sons. So that the Carlovingian family, at this time, numbered a large body of crowned heads.

The part played by the clergy in the wars between these different monarchs, the arrogance of their reprimands, and the humility and submissiveness of the kings, would be worthy of particular attention; and more minute details would prove the justness of our remarks on the general state of Europe; but, pressed by time, and restricted within the proportions we are bound to observe between the various parts of our narrative, we shall content ourselves with offering, in the most succinct manner in our power, one example of his domination,—the history of the quarrels of the young Lothaire, king of Lorraine, with the court of Rome, on the subject of his marriages. It was a great step gained by the popes when they succeeded in establishing their jurisdiction over monarchs in matters relating to their dissolute pleasures.

In the year 856, Lothaire had married Theutberge, daughter of count Boson of Burgundy, but the next year he put her away, accusing her of incest with her brother, abbot of the convents of St. Maurice and Luxen. As the queen had purged herself from this allegation by the ordeal of boiling water, out of which her champion had come unharmed, Lothaire had been compelled to take her back in 858. Nevertheless, not only had he another attachment, but he pretended that he was under solemn engagements to another woman. He affirmed that, before his union with Theutberge, he had been betrothed to Walrade, sister of the archbishop of Cologne, and mother of the archbishop of Trèves; that he had quitted her, in consequence of constraint alone, (during a civil war,) and that he had never ceased to look upon her as his lawful wife.

Theutberge had been taken back by her husband; but, perhaps in order to escape the humiliations she had to experience in a palace in which she had been reinstated by force, perhaps as a homage to truth, she made a voluntary confession, in the month of January, 860, of the incest of which she had been accused. The bishops assembled in council at Aix-la-Chapelle, before whom she made this confession, pronounced sentence of divorce, and condemned her to be confined in a convent. Shortly after,

she found means to escape, and the whole priesthood of Christendom now took cognizance of this quarrel. We have no means of determining whether the zeal with which they opposed the divorce of Theutberge arose from an *esprit de corps*, which rendered them anxious to save the reputation of the abbot of St. Maurice; or merely from the desire of the clergy to preserve an absolute jurisdiction over marriage, and to keep all sovereigns in a state of dependence upon them. The Merovingian kings had had several wives at a time, (not to mention their numerous mistresses,) and had repudiated them according to their own caprices: Charlemagne had followed their example. Louis I. had adopted a morality more in conformity with the laws of religion and the injunctions of the clergy. It appeared to them that the attempt of Lothaire to shake off their yoke, ought to be punished in a manner so exemplary as to strike terror into all others. Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, took upon himself to prove that, even though Theutberge should have been guilty of incest before her marriage, it was not a sufficient reason for pronouncing sentence of divorce.

We cannot follow out the history of the different councils, which alternately dissolved the marriage of Theutberge, and forced Lothaire to take her again. We shall pass over the details of this scandalous affair, which for fifteen years occupied the attention of all Christendom. We need scarcely say, that the forced union of Lothaire and Theutberge increased the hatred and resentment of each towards the other. Lothaire ceased not to solicit permission to repair to Rome, to explain and justify his conduct; whilst Nicholas I., who then occupied the papal throne, haughtily refused his request. Theutberge, on her side, petitioned to be allowed to separate herself from a husband whom she rendered miserable, and with whom she could enjoy no happiness. The reply of pope Nicholas was as follows:—"We are equally astonished at the expressions contained in thy letters, and in the discourses of thy deputies, and at remarking so complete a change in thy style and in thy demands. We do not forget that in former times thou laidst before us nothing of the like kind. Every body attests to us that thou art borne down by an unceasing affliction, by an intolerable oppression, by a hateful violence; whilst thou, on the contrary, affirmest that no one constrains thee when thou demandest to be stripped of the royal dignity. As to the testimony thou offerest in favour of Walrade, declaring

that she had been the lawful wife of Lothaire, it is of no avail that thou labourest to establish this point. No one needs thy testimony concerning it. It is for us to know what is just; it is for us to decide what is equitable; and even wert thou thyself reprobate or dead, never would we permit Lothaire to take his mistress Walrade to wife."

After the death of Nicholas I., however, the moment arrived in which the Holy See permitted Lothaire to repair to Rome, in order to justify himself. He thought he had merited special favour in consequence of his having led an army against the Saracens, who laid waste the south of Italy, and had menaced even the papal dominions, then governed by Adrian II. But the heads of the church judged it more important to prove that, even in this world, the highest dignities did not shelter sinners from her judgments.

About the end of July, 869, Lothaire made his entry into Rome. Already he might have perceived that the vengeance of the church was suspended over his head. But we shall confine ourselves to a report of the words of archbishop Hincmar, the author of the annals of St. Bertin, and shall leave the reader to draw the conclusions which the facts may appear to him to warrant.

"When pope Adrian returned to Rome, Lothaire, who followed him, arrived at the church of St. Peter; but not a single priest presented himself to receive him, and he was alone with his own followers when he advanced to the tomb of the apostle. He afterwards entered some rooms, close to that church, which he was to inhabit, but they had not even been swept for his reception. He thought that on the following day, which was Sunday, mass would be performed before him; but this he could by no means obtain from the pope. Nevertheless he entered Rome the next day, and dined with the pope himself in the palace of the Lateran, where they gave each other presents."

Adrian afterwards invited Lothaire and all his court to a solemn communion; but it was accompanied with circumstances, which were calculated to strike him with terror. "After the mass was concluded," says the contemporary author of the annals of Metz, "the sovereign pontiff, taking in his hands the body and the blood of the Lord, called the king to the table of Christ, and spoke to him thus:—'If thou knowest thyself to be innocent of the crime of adultery, for which thou wert excommu-

nicated by our sovereign lord Nicholas, and if thou art thoroughly determined in thy heart never again in thy life to hold criminal commerce with Walrade thy mistress, approach with confidence, and receive the sacrament of redemption, which shall be to thee the pledge of the remission of thy sins, and of thy eternal salvation. But if thou hast proposed in thy soul to yield again to the blandishments of thy mistress, beware of taking this sacrament, lest that which the Lord hath prepared as a remedy for his faithful servants, be converted into a chastisement for thee.' ”

Lothaire, confused and agitated by this address, received the communion from the hands of the pontiff, without any retraction; after which Adrian, turning to the companions of the king, offered to each the communion in these words:—“ ‘ If thou hast not given thy consent to the sins of thy king Lothaire, and if thou hast not held intercourse with Walrade, nor with the others whom the Holy See hath excommunicated, may the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be to thee eternal life!’ Every one of them, feeling himself compromised, took the communion with a rash boldness. This was on Sunday, the 31st of July, of the year 869; and every one of them died by a judgment of heaven, before the first day of the next year. There were a very small number who avoided taking the communion, and who thus saved themselves from death.”

Lothaire, himself, on quitting Rome, was attacked with the disease with which the pontiff had threatened him as a chastisement. He, however, dragged himself as far as Piacenza, where he expired on the 8th of August. From the time he quitted the gates of Rome, all his followers, all who had received the holy elements from the hands of the pontiff, fell at his side; there were but very few who reached Piacenza with the king; the rest died on the way. Adrian acknowledged the judgment of God in this calamity, and announced it to the kings of the earth, as an awful lesson of submission to the church.

This appeal to the judgment of God was then universally resorted to for the discovery of every sort of crime. When it was invoked, it was indifferent whether a poison or a wholesome beverage was offered to the accused. For the innocent, the poison became innoxious: after an invocation like Adrian's, the bread of life would, to the guilty, be transmuted into poison.

CHAPTER XX.

Character of Charles the Bald.—His Reign.—Death of Pepin II.—Sons of Lothaire.—Wars among the Carlovingian Princes.—Charles's Cruelty to his Sons.—Pope John VIII.—Weakness of Charles's Government.—Invasions of the Saracens and Normans.—Norman Settlements in France.—Their Ravages.—Death of Charles the Bald.—Invasion of Italy by Karlo-man of Bavaria.—His Coronation.—His Death.—Charles the Fat crowned Emperor at Rome by Pope John VIII.—Louis of Saxony.—Charles the Fat.—His Character.—Conversion of Countships into Hereditary Offices.—Increased Power of the Aristocracy and the Church.—Louis the Stam-merer.—His Sons and Successors.—Boson, Count of Burgundy.—His Ele-vation.—Fate of Louis III. and his Brother Karloman.—Succession of Charles the Fat to the whole Western Empire.—Siege of Paris.—Depo-sition and Death of Charles.—Extinction of the legitimate Carlovingian Line.—Division of the Empire into many States.—General Degradation and Depopulation of France.—Incursions of the Northmen, Saracens, and Huns.—Rise of Feudal Institutions.—Consequent Increase of Popu-lation and Strength.

WE have beheld the establishment of a universal monarchy; and, as far as it was possible within our narrow limits, we have marked what were the fatal consequences of that establishment to the po-pulation and to the character and courage of the nations incorpo-rated into so huge and ill compacted a mass. We have seen, af-ter the neglect and violation of national interests, the disgraceful quarrels of rapacious princes kindle wars in which patriotism could have no share. We have seen the deplorable feebleness of this immense empire, exposed without defence to the violence of every predatory horde. In the two years which conclude the ninth century we shall see it fall to pieces, and an infinite num-ber of new monarchies and small principalities arise out of its ruins; at the same time we shall see the rapid extinction of the Carlovingian dynasty, every branch of which disappears, with the exception of one single offset, whose claims to the throne were long disowned and rejected. This last remaining heir of all the glo-ry of the founders of his line, and of all the infamy of its later monarchs, Charles the Simple, did, it is true, recover the crown of France after the lapse of some years; and the Carlovingian dynasty is said to have reigned a century over the French, after it had lost the thrones of Germany and of Italy. But this cen-tury of lingering struggles of the royal line was rather a long in-terregnum, during which the title of king was preserved by men

who were in fact no more than petty lords; while the nation, left to itself, began its work of self-reform, and new social bodies sprang out of the ruins of the mighty empire. France required a century more than its neighbours to reconstitute itself, because, of all the countries subject to the rule of Charlemagne, it was the one in which the power of the people had been the most completely annihilated, and, consequently, the one in which the fewest elements for the reconstruction of a new social fabric remained, after the dissolution of the old one.

In the period we have gone through, the different parts of the empire seemed to have no feeling of their separate interests, no peculiar recollections, no distinct rights. No illustrious name, no remarkable family, nothing provincial, individual, or local, attracts our attention. If this universal sameness and apathy has rendered the history we have treated of less dramatic, it has, on the other hand, left our minds at full liberty to follow the main current of common disasters, the general convulsions of the empire, undistracted by the varied and animated incidents which complicate, while they adorn, the history of a more fortunate age.

But this monotony is soon to cease. We are arrived at the point whence we begin to descry the rise of all modern grandeur,—of all the powerful families, all the provincial sovereignties, all the privileges, which, for eight centuries, have been set in opposition no less to the claims of the crown, than to the rights of the people. The name of nobility may have heretofore occurred in history; but a real nobility, such as it has existed under the monarchies of modern times, such as it has maintained itself in the character of an order in the state, can trace its origin no higher than to this era of the total disruption of the hitherto existing forms of society.

In like manner, we have seen the names of *fief* and *beneficium*, and indications of some feudal obligations; but the feudal system, strictly speaking, did not arise till after this period of anarchy: it was the principle of a new order of things, which was substituted to a state of confusion and of suffering a hundred times worse than those which this system introduced or tolerated.

Of the thirty-two years which elapsed after the death of Lothaire the younger, to the end of the century, nine (A. D. 869—877,) were filled by the disasters which raised Charles the Bald

to the disgraceful possession of the imperial throne; eleven, (A. D. 877—888,) by the rapid mortality which carried off all the heads of the Carolingian house, and the extinction of all the legitimate branches; twelve, (889—900,) by the civil wars which gave birth to the independent monarchies of Italy, Germany, France, Burgundy, and Provence. We should despair of being able to throw any light or any interest over the whole of this period, in which the characters become dim and colourless in proportion to the increase in the number of names. We must, however, take a summary view of it; for, however dense the cloud which obscures the circumstances of this revolution, the revolution itself was not the less important.

Fortune seemed to delight in elevating Charles the Bald, only to render more insupportable the humiliations to which she exposed him; she heaped crowns upon the head from which she tore laurels. Incapable either of governing or of defending his kingdom; suffering his vassals to strip him of his provinces, and a handful of pirates to devastate the whole line of his coasts, his only chance of satisfying his ambition was from the calamities of his own kindred: and this kind of good fortune was not denied him. His brother Pepin had left two sons; Pepin II. king of Aquitaine, and Charles: the whole reign of Charles the Bald was one continued scene of aggressions upon them. Two several times he succeeded in taking them prisoners: the first time he only confined them in convents; but the second, Pepin having been betrayed into his power by Rainulf, count of Poitiers, the meeting of the states of France held at Pistes, in the month of June, 864, condemned the king of Aquitaine to death as an apostate and traitor to his country. The sentence was, however, not executed, and Pepin II. died in the dungeon of a convent at Senlis.

The emperor Lothaire, elder brother of Charles, had left three sons; the youngest of whom, Charles, king of Provence, died in 875; the second, Lothaire, king of Lorraine, died in 869; lastly, the eldest, the emperor Louis II., who had inherited Italy, died at Brescia, on the 12th of August, 875. Charles the Bald claimed to inherit the dominions of all three: he did not, however, obtain tranquil possession of them till after the death not only of his last surviving nephew, but after that of his own brother, Louis the Germanic, who died at Frankfort, on the 28th of August, 876. So long as Louis lived, he contended

that he had an equal claim with Charles to the inheritance of his nephews: the frequent wars between them had given up the West to the incursions of barbarians, while those who ought to have been its defenders, were occupied in shedding each other's blood. Louis the Germanic left three sons, among whom he divided his states. He gave to Karloman, Bavaria; to Louis, Saxony and Thuringia; and to Charles the Fat, Swabia. Charles the Bald at first flattered himself that he should strip his German nephews of their birthright, as he had stripped those of Italy and Aquitaine: but he was beaten on the 7th of October, 876, by Louis of Saxony, at Andernach, and the following year put to flight in Italy by Karloman; so that, in this instance, his injustice and rapacity brought him nothing but defeat and disaster.

Even his own sons furnished occasion for the scandalous and atrocious exploits of a prince whose whole life was passed in acts of hostility and usurpation towards his nearest relations, while he shrank from encountering his own and his subjects' real and formidable foes,—the Normans and the Saracens. To his two elder sons, Louis and Charles, he had given the two crowns of Neustria and Aquitaine: both of them revolted, and were conquered. The younger, Charles, died soon after of a wound received in a mock engagement: Louis the Stammerer survived his father, but with a ruined constitution and an enfeebled intellect. His two younger sons, Charles the Bald had shut up in convents, where they were condemned to do penance, in conformity with the opinions of the age, for the sins of their father. Karloman, however, impatient of restraint, and averse from a religious life, escaped from the cloister, and committed various acts of violence and disorder in Lorraine. He was at length retaken by his father, who caused his eyes to be put out, in order that he might support his captivity with more patience. (A. D. 874.)

Such were the steps by which Charles the Bald ascended the imperial throne; his right to which was confirmed by pope John VIII. at the end of the year 875. "We have elected him," wrote the pontiff to a synod assembled at Pavia, "we have approved him with the consent of our brethren the bishops, of the other ministers of the holy Roman church, of the Roman senate and people." Thus did the pope claim the right of disposing of the imperial crown. He pretended to be the substitute for that whole nation of senators and warriors whose representative he

called himself, and in whose name he invoked the names and the institutions of antiquity to sanction the domination of a modern autocrat. Never had the greatest of the Frankic princes been eulogized or held up as a model to mankind, as was the feeble Charles the Bald. In fact, he, who during his whole life had trembled in abject subservience to the prelates of his own kingdom, must needs have appeared to John VIII. the best of sovereigns, inasmuch as he was the most submissive to the power of Rome.

It was not long, however, before the very pope who had crowned him began to perceive that it was not enough to give to the empire a chief pious, timid, and obsequious; who would resist no usurpation, who would check no abuse; that it stood in need of an energetic ruler. Every one wanted to free himself from the national power wielded by the monarch, though at the same time every one would have desired that this national power should exist for his own defence. It was soon proved that all the force which had been committed to the hands of Charles the Bald had fallen to utter destruction. The Saracens, whom Louis II. had resisted with an honourable persistency in the duchy of Benevento, since the king of the Franks had become emperor, menaced the capital of Christendom. "The heathens," says John in a letter to Charles the Bald, "and wicked Christians, who are without the fear of God, overwhelm us with such a multitude of evils, that nothing comparable to it can be found in the memory of man. The remnant of the people have retreated within the walls of the holy city; there they struggle against inexpressible poverty and want, while the whole region without the walls of Rome is laid waste, and reduced to a solitude. There remains to us but one evil to fear, and may God avert that from us,—the loss and the ruin of Rome itself."

It was less with the view of carrying to the pope the succours he demanded, than for the sake of escaping from the sight of the ravages the Northmen were committing throughout the west of France, that Charles the Bald resolved to march a second time into Italy. The Northmen had established military colonies on the Seine, at a place called Le Bec d'Oisel; on the Somme, the Scheldt, the Loire, the Garonne, and, lastly, in the island of Camargue in the Rhone. Hither they retired with their vessels; here they deposited their booty; and hence they issued forth again to carry their ravages into the heart of the kingdom.

“ There was not a city, not a village, not a hamlet,” says the contemporary author of the account of the miracles of St. Benedict, “ which had not in its turn experienced the frightful barbarity of the pagans. They scoured these provinces at first on foot, for they were ignorant of the use of cavalry, but afterwards on horseback, like our own people. The stations of their vessels were so many storehouses for their plunder: near these ships, which were moored to the shore, they built huts, which at length seemed to form large villages, and in them they kept their troops of captives bound with chains.”

Charles, who had assembled a numerous army to accompany him into Italy, instead of attempting to expel these piratical invaders, contented himself with fixing the tribute which certain provinces should pay to the Normans of the Seine, others to the Normans of the Loire, to put a stop to their depredations. As to the Normans of the Garonne, they had reduced Aquitaine to so abject a state, that the pope transferred the archbishop Frothaire from the diocese of Bordeaux to that of Bourges, alleging that “ the province of Bordeaux was made entirely desert by the pagans.”

But scarcely had Charles met the pope at Pavia, when the news of the approach of his nephew, Karloman, with an army levied in the provinces which now constitute Austria, struck him with terror. The German historians, indeed, accuse him of habitual cowardice. He fled across Mont Cenis; and in that Alpine region was attacked with a violent fever, and died at a place called Brios, on the 6th of October, 877.

Karloman, whose mere approach had sufficed to put to flight his imperial uncle, had yet no reason to congratulate himself on the issue of his Italian expedition. He was crowned at Pavia with the consent of the Lombard nobles, and from that time bore the title of king of Italy. But the plague broke out in his army, and he himself was attacked with a complaint which was attended by extreme debility, followed by paralysis, and, finally, brought him to the grave, on the 22d of March, 880.

He left only one son, a bastard, Arnulf, whom he had made the duke of Kärnthen, or Carinthia: he had no legitimate children. Two brothers had divided with him the inheritance of their father Louis the Germanic: they watched the course of his long illness, and awaited his death to partition the kingdoms of Bavaria and Italy, over which Karloman had reigned: their attention was thus

in some measure diverted from France, on which, however, they made some attempts. After the death of Karloman, Charles the Fat entered Italy at the head of an army. At Pavia he received the crown of Lombardy; and at Rome, about the end of the year 880, he was invested with that of the empire by Pope John VIII. He united both to Swabia, his original inheritance. The other brother, Louis of Saxony, annexed Bavaria, which he acquired at Karloman's death, to the dukedom he had received from his father. Louis had only one legitimate son, who, while still a minor, fell from a window of the palace of Regensburg, and was killed: he had also a natural son, named Hugo, who was slain about the same time in an engagement with the Normans near the forest of Carbo-naria. Having thus survived both his sons, Louis of Saxony, who had probably not yet attained his fiftieth year, fell ill, and died at Frankfurt, on the 20th of January, 882.

By the death of his cousins, to each of whose territories he became heir in succession, Charles the Fat—whose surname, Crassus, would be still better rendered by the Gross*—acquired an elevation to which he had little claim on the score of merit. His enormously corpulent body was, in fact, the covering of a sluggish and imbecile mind. He appeared scarcely susceptible of any other desire, of any other thought, than those engendered by his immoderate love of eating; and the higher the dignities which fortune showered upon him, the more glaring did his supineness and incapacity become to his people. Yet he was decorated with the imperial crown; he was sovereign of Italy and of the whole of Germany, before his time divided into three powerful kingdoms; and of that part of France called Lorraine. The rest, by that fatality which seemed attached to the whole Carlovingian race, was soon destined to devolve to him.

One only son had survived Charles the Bald: he was known by the name of Louis II., or the Stammerer. He was thirty years of age at the time of his father's death. His health was always precarious; his intellect was thought to be feeble, and his character more feeble still. Perhaps no energy, no ability, could have revived the empire from that state of languor and exhaustion in which Charles the Bald had left it.

The Northmen were encamped in all the provinces, while the

* The author's word is *Epais*. We can hardly say Charles the Thick: though *thick*, doubtless, originally meant fat, as its German cognate *dick* still does. Charles was called by his subjects *Karl der dicke*.—*Transl.*

prelates were the virtual sovereigns of the kingdom. The greater part of the territory belonged to the church, and the councils and convocations of the bishops and powerful abbots were the only bodies possessed of any authority. In the very year in which Charles the Bald died, he signed the edict of Xiersi, (June 14, 877,) by which he renounced the last fragment of his authority over the provinces. According to the capitularies of Charlemagne, the sovereign was to be represented in every province by a count, whom he nominated or dismissed at pleasure. These counts executed the royal commands; they were the commanders of the militia of freemen, and presided over the local courts and assemblies. But during the feeble government of the son and of the grandsons of Charlemagne, the monarch had scarcely ever dared to exercise his right of dismissing the counts. He had allowed them to confound the delegated power which they held from him, with the patrimonial government of their feudal domain and vassals. This weakness Charles carried still farther. By the edict of Xiersi he bound himself always to bestow on the son of a count, and as a lawful inheritance, the honour of the countship (*l'honneur du comté*), which had been held by the father. By this edict the condition of the freeholders was rendered still more deplorable than before, since they had no longer any protection or appeal against the tyranny or oppression of the great proprietors; while the latter, getting possession of almost all the counties, France was soon divided into as many independent sovereignties as there had been lord-lieutenancies held at the king's pleasure.

None of the counts, however, any more than any of the seignorial proprietors, had as yet presumed to claim the right of waging war. There had been an habitual want of obedience in the provinces; there had been occasional acts of disorder and violence, as was to be expected from the anarchical state of the kingdom; but no count or lord had as yet imagined that his rank or dignity authorized him to right himself with his sword: and some of them having tried to fortify their houses, as a means of securing themselves against the predatory attacks of the Normans, and to surround them with a wall which gave them the appearance of a castle, the edict of Pistes, of the month of June, 864, ordered that every castle constructed without the express permission of the king should be razed to the ground before the 1st of August then following.

But hardly had the edict of Xiersi rendered the countships hereditary in the families of the nobles, when the crown ceased to be so in the royal family. A part of the counts and abbots of France refused to acknowledge Louis the Stammerer as successor to his father. They assembled in arms at Avenay in Champagne, and it was not till after considerable negotiation that they consented to meet him at Compiègne. They obliged him to confirm all the ancient laws and privileges of the church and the nobles; they exacted from him an amnesty in favour of all who had taken arms against him; they made him promise to maintain the discipline of the church; to style himself king *by the grace of God and the election of the people*; and at length they consented, in the name of the bishops, abbots, nobles, and others, to his coronation, which took place on the 8th of December, 877.

Louis the Stammerer did not reign two years under the protection of this aristocracy and that of pope John VIII., who had repaired to France, where his demeanour was far more that of a sovereign than the king's. In obedience to his father's commands, Louis had divorced his first wife, by whom he had two sons, Louis and Karloman; and had married a second wife, by whom he had a third son, Charles, afterwards surnamed the Simple. The king applied to the pope to sanction a divorce which had been compulsory, and thus to settle the question of the legitimacy of his children; but John VIII. chose to declare himself for the first wife and against the second; thus introducing fresh confusion into the royal house.

While things were in this posture, and after the pope had taken his departure, Louis the Stammerer died at Compiègne on the 10th of April, 879. His two sons, the eldest of whom was not above seventeen, were again the sport of that ecclesiastical aristocracy which assumed the right of disposing of the crown; and, after stripping themselves still farther of their prerogatives, the princes were at length crowned, at the abbey of Ferrières, near Paris, by Ansegise, archbishop of Sens.

At the same time, however, a count of Burgundy, named Boson, brother of the second wife of Charles the Bald, and to whom that monarch had granted several governments in Lombardy and in Provence, intrigued with pope John VIII. to secure his own elevation to the throne. Spite of all the influence of that pontiff, who declared that he adopted him as a son, Boson did not succeed in Lombardy. He was more successful in Provence,

where he distributed a great number of abbeys and benefices among the bishops and archbishops, having bound himself to guaranty them in such a manner that they might unite them to their pastoral duties. Having thus secured their suffrages, he convoked them for the month of October, 879, to a diet which he held at the castle of Mantaille, between Vienne and Valance. The six archbishops of Vienne, Lyons, Tarentaise, Aix, Arles, and Besançon, met there, together with seventeen bishops of the same provinces. Counts and other lay lords appear also to have attended this meeting; but such was their state of subjection to the prelates, that they were not even called on to sign the acts of the diet, nor was any mention made of their names.

The prelates of the diet or council of Mantaille adjudged the crown to count Boson, in order, as they said, that he might defend them against the attacks of Satan, and those of their visible and corporeal enemies. The strangest thing, however, is, that they assigned no limits to the kingdom they thus founded—that they gave it no name, either of a nation, or of a province. We should look in vain through the acts of the council for the name of the kingdom of Arles and Provence, which this state afterwards bore. We find, however, the speech addressed by Boson to the assembly. It may serve to give us some idea of the new theocracy to which France was subject.

“It is the fervour of your charity,” said he, “which, inspired by God, induces you to raise me to this office, in order that, with my feeble powers, I may combat in the service of my holy mother—the church of the living God. But I know my condition: I am but a frail earthen vessel, entirely unworthy of so exalted a charge. And, therefore, I should not have hesitated to refuse it, were I not convinced that it is the will of God, who has given you but one heart and one soul for this determination. Seeing, then, that I am bound to obey priests inspired by Heaven, and my own friends and faithful servants, I do not resist—I should not dare to do so, or to rebel against your orders. And as you yourselves have given me the rule which I ought to follow in my future government, and have instructed me according to the holy precepts of the church, I undertake this great work with confidence.”

Louis III. and Karloman, the young sons of Louis the Stammerer, tried in vain to defend Provence, which formed a considerable part of their inheritance, against the aggressions of Bo-

son; or to repel the Normans, who had poured down with fresh fury on the coasts of Neustria and Aquitaine. Their term of life was not sufficiently extended to allow them to carry through any of their enterprises, nor even to give France an opportunity of judging of their characters and talents. Louis III., riding one day, met the daughter of a Frankic nobleman, named Gormond, and was struck by her remarkable beauty. He called her; and the young girl, terrified at his discourse, and at the royal tone of familiarity he assumed, instead of answering him, fled to the shelter of her father's house. Louis determined to follow her; and, putting spurs to his horse, dashed forward, intending to ride through the door, which stood open. He had not, however, taken accurate measure of the height of the doorway. He received a blow on the head, which, at the same time, threw him against his saddle bow with such violence as to break his back. In this state, he ordered his attendants to carry him to the convent of St. Denis, where he hoped to be restored by the intercession of the saints. There, however, he died, on the 5th of August, 882.

Karloman, who now united his brother's inheritance to that portion of France which he already possessed, survived him only two years. As he was one day hunting the wild boar in the forest of Baisieu, he was accidentally wounded in the leg by the sword of one of his companions. The wound gangrened, and, in seven days, on the 6th of December, 884, he died, aged only eighteen.

The two young princes died without issue. Their half brother, Charles the Simple, not only was still an infant, but was regarded as a bastard, his mother's marriage having been declared null by the pope. Charles the Fat was the sole remaining heir of the blood of Charlemagne; and on the head of that monarch, brutified as he was by intemperance—to whom no one would have intrusted the care of the most insignificant of his private affairs—descended the united crowns of Bavaria, Swabia, Saxony, France (eastern and western,) Aquitaine, and Italy. The whole extent of the empire subject to the sway of Charlemagne was equally subject to him; and the Germanic part of it was far more populous, far more civilized, and perhaps, far more powerful, than it had been under the great conqueror. It seemed as if the whole West was confided to hands so utterly weak and incompetent, for the sake of furnishing to mankind a striking proof of the

fatal effects of a universal monarchy, and of a corrupting form of government. The entire Western empire, united under one head, and with not an enemy save a handful of sea-robbers, could not defend itself against them on a single point.

Paris was besieged by the Northmen for a whole year, (A. D. 885, 886,) during which the whole Gallic nobility did not march a single soldier to its defence; during which the monarch did not fight a single battle for the deliverance of the capital of one of his greatest kingdoms. The citizens, however, seeing no resource but in their own despair, resisted with their unassisted strength, and they repulsed the Normans.

At this same time Rome was menaced by the Saracens; and the troops of Charles the Fat, instead of defending the capital of Christendom, pillaged Pavia, in which they were quartered. Every thing seemed to conspire to render the last of the Carlovingian emperors ridiculous and despicable,—even to the charges he brought against his wife at the diet at Kirkheim, and the revelations she was obliged to make in her own defence. The precarious and declining health of Charles the Fat might have inclined the people to await the near termination of his life; but the evident decay of his reason rendered it imperative on the nobility and leading men to settle the future government of the kingdom. A diet of the Germanic states was convoked at the palace of Tribur, on the Rhine: they came to a resolution to offer the crown to Arnulf, duke of Kärnthen, or Carinthia, a natural son of Karloman, and nephew of the emperor. In three days, Charles the Fat was so completely deserted, that he had hardly sufficient servants about his person to render him the common offices of humanity; and Liutberg, bishop of Maintz, was obliged to supplicate Arnulf to secure the means of subsistence to his uncle. Some church property was accordingly set apart for that purpose, which Charles needed but for a few weeks: he died on the 12th of January, 888, at a castle called Indinga, in Swabia.

If the subjects of Charles—those whom the imbecility of this great-grandson of Charlemagne had reduced to the most deplorable state,—avenged themselves by heaping contempt and scorn upon his memory, the clergy had a very different standard by which to try the virtues of a king. They honoured Charles the Fat almost as a saint. “He was,” says Rhegius, contemporary abbot of Pruem, “a most Christian prince, fearing God, and obeying his commands with all his heart. He also obeyed the

precepts of the clergy with the most profound devotion. He gave abundant alms; he was constantly occupied in prayer and in chanting of psalms; he was indefatigable in repeating God's praises, and he put all his hope, and all his trust, in the Divine grace. He therefore regarded the tribulations of his later years as a purifying trial, which was to secure to him the crown of life." The annals of Fulda even relate, that "the heavens were seen to open to receive him, so that it might be made evident, that he whom men had despised, was the sovereign the most acceptable to God."

The people of Europe had been so long accustomed to the hereditary descent of monarchical power, that, at the extinction of the family of Charlemagne, they hesitated for some time before they would choose rulers who were not of that line. Nevertheless, Arnulf, the bastard son of Karloman, to whom the crown of Germany had been offered, was not recognised by the other western states. The most powerful of the dukes and counts, especially those who could claim some kindred with the family of Charlemagne, either through an illegitimate or a female branch, called together diets in all directions, bought the suffrages of their partisans by ample concessions, and got themselves crowned with the title of kings.

In the course of the same year, (888,) Eudes, count of Paris, who had displayed some bravery in the defence of that city against the Normans, was crowned at Compiègne and acknowledged by Neustria. Rainulf II., count of Poitiers, with the approbation of another diet, took the title of king of Aquitaine. Guido, duke of Spoleto, who had fiefs and partisans in France, was proclaimed by a diet of the kingdom of Lorraine, assembled at Langres, and was anointed and crowned by the bishop of that city; but finding, in a short time, that his followers were lukewarm in his cause, he returned to Italy, where, in 890, he obtained the crown of Lombardy and that of the empire, which he shared with his son Lambert. Another diet had adjudged the crown of Lombardy to Berenger, duke of Friuli, in 888. Between the Jura and the Alps, a count Rudolf, who governed Helvetia, assembled a diet at St. Maurice, in the Valais, caused himself to be crowned, and founded the new monarchy of Transjurane Burgundy. At Valence, Louis, the son of Boson, was crowned, in 890, king of Provence. At Vannes, Alain, surnamed the Great, was crowned king of Britany. In Gascony,

Sanchez, surnamed Mitarra, contented himself with the title of duke; but, at the same time, disclaimed all allegiance to France.

At the moment of the formation of all these new kingdoms, the torch of western history seems suddenly quenched. For nearly half a century all the chronicles are mute. Wars between these numerous sovereigns, (to whom we have to add Charles the Simple, crowned at Rheims on the 28th of January, 893, and Zwentibold, natural son of Arnulf, crowned king of Lorraine, at Worms, in 895,) filled the twelve remaining years of the century; but they were languidly carried on by sovereigns without troops, dependent on vassals with whom they were always obliged to compromise, and whom they did not dare to command. A universal confusion reigned throughout the West, but no individual character is sufficiently striking to excite our curiosity; and, perhaps, we ought to be grateful to the chroniclers whose silence prevents us from involving ourselves in such a labyrinth.

The deposition of Charles the Fat, and the extinction of the legitimate Carlovingian race, overthrew the colossal empire reared by Charlemagne; and in the partition of the provinces of which it was composed, gave occasion to continual wars; to an anarchy, a confusion of rights and claims, which we are led, at first sight, to think must have aggravated the sufferings of the already miserable people. And we, accordingly, find, that almost all modern writers agree in representing the deposition of Charles the Fat, and the first interregnum which followed it in the Western empire, as a calamity which replunged Europe into the state of barbarism whence Charlemagne had begun to raise it. We are, likewise, left without the guidance of historical documents at this period, and we have to grope our way through a century in darkness almost as complete as that which precedes the reign of Charlemagne.

Nevertheless, it was in the midst of this obscurity that new and numerous states came into existence; that a population which had been almost destroyed began to recover itself; that some virtues, the virtues of feudalism at least, were once more held in honour; that national courage, which seemed extinct, regained all its loftiness and splendour, at least among the aristocracy. The first century of the government of the Carlovingians destroyed old France; the second, which equally bears their name, though the

power of Charles the Simple and of his children was but a shadow, recreated modern France.

The period which we have just passed through is probably without a parallel in history for its calamities, its weakness, and its infamy. Although military courage be far from the first of social virtues, its complete annihilation is, perhaps, the most certain indication of the extinction of all others. It throws a nation into such a state of abject dependence on every vicissitude and on every foe, that if it were possible to unite all the advantages of the most perfect government with the cowardice of a whole people, all those advantages would be utterly valueless, since they would be utterly without security.

But the history of the world presents us with no example of pusillanimity comparable to that of the subjects of the empire when they allowed themselves to be plundered, made captive, and slaughtered by the Northmen. It was not a great people which poured down upon them; it was not those successive waves of northern barbarians that inundated the Roman empire. It was, on the contrary, handfuls of pirates; adventurers who landed on the coasts of France in open barks, lightly armed, and almost without horses.

In times less remote we have seen the flourishing empires of Peru and Mexico ravaged, and ultimately conquered, by bands of warriors scarcely more numerous. But the Spaniards had fire-arms, cuirasses, and helmets impenetrable to the arrows of the Indians; while, on the other hand, their finely tempered sabres cut through all the Indian armour. They had horses trained to war and exulting in battle, which bore their riders with frightful rapidity against enemies who always fought on foot. Lastly, they had vessels which the Americans took for winged monsters, vomiting fire and flame.

It was not thus that the Northmen disembarked from their wattle boats on the banks of the Seine and the Loire. Their bodies were half naked, their weapons were inferior to those of the people of the south, who had so long been masters of the mechanical arts. But these northern sea-robbers were superior in warlike virtues to the two other wandering nations who also ravaged the empire. The Saracens had lost their victorious fanaticism and their love of glory, during the decay of the empire of the khalifs: and their expeditions into Italy and Provence had no longer any incentive but the love of plunder. The Hungarians, who inspired so

much terror in Germany, rode little horses, which a Frank soldier would have disdained; they wore a fur coat instead of a cuirass, and a light lance stood them instead of a sword or sabre. But Saracens, Hungarians, or Normans, all had to deal with disarmed and degraded peasants, and a degenerate nobility. They found victims, not enemies, in the empire of the West.

The moral explanation of this double revolution, which in the ninth century annihilated the national courage and destroyed the population; and in the tenth, multiplied the people and gave force and elevation to their character, is to be sought less in public institutions than in the personal interest of the great proprietors. The consolidation of the empire of Charlemagne into one body, had delivered the minds of the great proprietors from all expectation of proximate war. They no longer occupied themselves in any degree with the means of defending their domains, or of multiplying the men-at-arms who lived upon them; their whole attention was directed to the extracting from them the greatest possible revenues; and in every age and country masters and landlords have been disposed to think that they were enriching themselves when they made harder terms with their serfs or tenants, when they succeeded in loading them with more onerous obligations and in extorting larger rents. Thus it was that the great mass of the nation became enslaved. But slavery and extortion soon produced their wonted effect; families became extinct, or fled; the population disappeared, and the greater part of France was changed into a desert. The great proprietors saw without regret, that the manses, or habitations, for each of which they were obliged to furnish a soldier to the king, were abandoned. They thought it more profitable to themselves to turn their arable land into pasture, and to multiply flocks and herds in proportion as men diminished. They could not understand that a country cannot be rich when it ceases to furnish consumers, when it no longer contains a nation to feed. They fell into the same error into which we have seen the lairds of the north of Scotland fall in our own days.

The rapid extinction of the rural population was the grand cause of the exposed state in which the empire was found by the hordes of brigands who ravaged it. We have, it is true, no accurate information concerning this fluctuation in the population. The historians of the time never thought of giving any account or explanation of it; but, in reading their narrative of events, it

is impossible not to be struck with the solitude into which we are introduced. It appears as if nothing was left in France but convents, scattered here and there amid vast tracts of forest. The cities had lost, in the ninth century, the importance they possessed under the first line of kings. We no longer read of intestine factions, nor of popular tumults, nor of municipal governments, nor of the resistance they could oppose to an enemy. Their gates stand open to any who are disposed to enter them. Often, indeed, the chronicles tell us that they were burned by the Normans; but the damage is always represented as less, and the booty carried off as inferior in value, in these cases, than when the same spoilers attack a monastery. The existence of the peasantry is as completely overlooked as that of the flocks with which they are confounded in one common oblivion: all that we can discover is, that the distrust of their masters had left them no means of resistance; and, accordingly, the Northmen, after carrying off the wives and daughters of the peasants, after massacring the old men and the priests, roamed about the country, alone, or in small parties, wherever their inclination or the chase might lead them, without the slightest fear of the vengeance of the natives.

Even among the higher nobility and clergy we are amazed at the small number of persons who appear at any given time on the stage. A single count unites in his own person the titles of a great number of counties; a single prelate, the revenues of a great number of abbeys; and when the abbot Hugues, of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, and of St. Martin de Tours, is called by the historians of the time *l'Espérance des Gaules*, we feel that the French people are degraded to the condition of men owned in *main morte* by a convent.

So long as the nation was reduced to such a state of feebleness, of political ignorance, of opposition between the interests of the higher classes and those of the mass, a central government could be of no advantage to France or to Europe: it could serve only to perpetuate this universal degradation. It was, therefore, a happy event for humanity that the tie which held together the social body was forcibly broken at the time of the deposition of Charles the Fat, and that the Western empire was divided into several monarchies, which were soon split up again into an infinite number of smaller states. When civilization has made great progress, the formation of large states presents great ad-

vantages: knowledge and intelligence are more easily and rapidly diffused; commerce is more active, more regular, and more independent of the errors of politicians; the power, the wealth, the talents which are at the disposal of government are far greater; and, if the rulers know how to make a good use of it, the progress of the species will be much more rapid. But, on the other hand, it is a far more difficult matter to establish a wise, tutelary, and free constitution in a great than in a small state; while it is much more easy to the former than to the latter to dispense with those advantages. A great empire sustains itself by its mass, in spite of almost intolerable abuses; while a small state has no chance of permanent existence unless it be supported by some degree of patriotism and of general prosperity.

The government of the Carlovingians had survived more calamities than would have sufficed to overthrow, ten times over, the governments which succeeded it. It fell beneath them, indeed, at last, but not till it had reached the lowest stage of contemptible imbecility. Those who gathered the fragments of the ruin were, perhaps, superior neither in talents, nor in virtues, nor in energy, to the wretched emperors who had suffered it to fall to decay; but, as their interests were more nearly allied with those of the mass, they were sooner brought to some understanding of them. When, for their own defence, force became of more value to them than riches, no high degree of perspicacity was necessary to perceive that they gained force in proportion as they increased the well being of their subjects.

Little more than twenty years had elapsed since the edict of Pistes had caused the total demolition of the fortifications which a few nobles had raised around their houses, as a defence against the Northmen. At that period, property, which gave the right of administering justice to vassals, the right of life and death over serfs, does not yet appear to have existed as a political force; it did not as yet secure to the nobles the means of defence and intimidation. But, after the deposition of Charles the Fat, no public authority prevented any individual from providing for his own defence by any means he had at command; from seeking within his own domains, first, security, and then, the power of making himself formidable. The dukes, counts, marquesses, and abbots who had shared among them the whole territory of France, consequently soon changed their object and their policy: they substituted ambition for cupidity; and demanded

of the earth men for the maintenance of their rights and their existence, rather than wealth for the indulgence of their appetites. Indeed, money no longer appeared of any value, except in so far as it was convertible into people. The value of an extent of country was estimated, not according to the number of pounds of silver for which its produce could be sold, but according to the number of soldiers it could send forth to follow the banner of their lord, or to defend his castle from aggression.

Thus it was that this period of troubles and disasters which seemed to threaten with absolute destruction the miserable remnant of the population of the West, became, in fact, the epoch of a great and beneficent revolution, which raised that population from its abasement. The lord offered his land to the vassal who appeared disposed to cultivate it, and was satisfied with a small remuneration in money, or in produce; instead of rent, he required personal services. The terms on which these various services were exacted, were as different as the orders of men by whom they were rendered. Younger sons of noble families, free men, citizens or burgesses, liberated slaves, even serfs, were admitted, in a regular scale of subordination, which they never attempted to infringe, to share the soil, and to give the equivalent in service. All these men, the majority of whom would have been destined, under the old order of things, to grow old in celibacy, were incited to marry, and could see, with satisfaction, a family multiplied around them.

The higher among them formed anew those intermediate orders of gentlemen, of *leudes*, of freemen, which had almost disappeared. The latter even rose, instead of sinking, in the scale of society. The vassal or serf was, it is true, in a state of absolute dependence on his lord. He had, as against him, no protection for liberty, property, honour, or even life; and yet he had rarely to dread any violent invasion of them. He regarded his chieftain as his natural judge and protector, and generally felt for him that respect, and even love, which the weak so readily grant to those whom they think of a superior race. The use of arms, which had been restored to him, had raised him in his own eyes, and had enabled him to regain some of those virtues which slavery destroys. He did not, indeed, go to battle on horseback, as the nobles and freemen did, but, at all events, he took the field with them; resistance was no longer forbidden to him;

and the consciousness of physical strength gave him the measure of the respect he had it in his power to command.

The rapidity with which the population increased, from these various causes, between the tenth and the twelfth centuries, is prodigious. Each of the great counties or earldoms split, in the course of two or three generations, into an infinite number of rural counties, viscounties, and seigniories; each of these was then subdivided in like manner. A village with its lord sprang up in every deserted and uncultivated tract; every community had its fortified place and its means of defence; and in less than two hundred years a count of Toulouse, a count of Vermandois, an earl of Flanders, became more powerful, and commanded braver, better disciplined, and even more numerous troops, than Charles the Fat, or Louis the Débonnaire, when sole monarchs of the Western empire, could have summoned to the field. But this prosperous state of the rural population lasted only so long as the nobles felt their own need of it. From the time that the great proprietors arrogated to themselves the right of private warfare, the iron yoke of the oligarchy had been lightened, only to fall back with greater violence and weight on the neck of the people, as soon as public order was sufficiently re-established to make it impossible for individuals to refer their differences to the decision of the sword. As soon as the lords ceased to want soldiers, they fell into their ancient greediness of money, and began once more to grind and oppress the husbandman. Then it was that the vileins were reduced to a shameful state of degradation: then it was that the feudal system pressed upon the people as the most intolerable of despotisms. It had introduced some order, some virtue, and some prosperity into a turbulent anarchy; but, from the time government was re-established, it did but add its own yoke to the yoke of the laws, till the two combined became too grievous for man to bear.

Thus, the feudal system, which, for a time, perhaps, contributed more than any other human institution to the multiplication and the prosperity of the lower orders, has come down to the posterity of those very men who owed their existence and their well-being to it, loaded with the responsibility of all the oppression and all the suffering which marked its decay; and its name is still mentioned with terror, while the infamy which ought to attach to the name of the Carlovingian monarchs is forgotten.

CHAPTER XXI.

Total Cessation of intercourse between Britain and the Continent.—Invasion of the Picts and Scots.—Vortigern.—Invasions of the Jutes and Saxons.—Hengist and Horsa.—Division of England.—Heptarchy.—Witena-Gemote.—Britons.—Divisions of Wales and Cornwall.—Ireland.—St. Patrick.—Irish Missionaries.—Caledonia.—Extermination of the Picts.—Pope Gregory and the Saxon Slaves.—Reconversion of England by St. Augustin.—Egbert.—Union of the seven Kingdoms.—Invasion of the Danes.—Defeat of Egbert.—Defeat of the Danes.—Death of Egbert.—Ethelwolf.—His Character and Death.—His Sons Ethelbald, Ethelbert, Ethelred, and Alfred.—Descent of Iwar on Northumberland.—Horrible Death of Rægnar Lodbrog.—Cruelties of the Danes.—Battles between Iwar and Ethelred.—Defeat and Death of Ethelred.—Conquests of the Danes.—Alfred the Great.—His Defeat and Concealment.—His Character and Accomplishments.—State of the Saxon People.—Battle of Kenwith.—Defeat and Death of Ubba.—Capture of the Raven Standard.—Visit of Alfred to the Danish Camp.—His Reappearance at the Head of a Saxon Army.—Defeat of Guthrum, and Submission of the Danes.—Alfred, Founder of the British Navy.—Witena-Gemote.—His Reforms in Law and Police.—His Learning and Love of Letters.—Oxford.—Death of Alfred.

FROM the time of the death of Honorius, and the recall of the last of the Roman legions sent to defend it, we have hardly had occasion to mention the island of Britain. It has been our endeavour to connect together the history of those countries which exercised a reciprocal influence, which acted and reacted on each other. But the great island of Britain, after having been for awhile drawn into the huge vortex of the world of Rome, had completely escaped from it. From that time, she had formed a world apart, severed from the rest of mankind, a stranger to the hopes and the fears by which Europe was agitated. She had been forgotten by the other former provinces of Rome, with which she had been associated in a common dependence, and in the ten books of the History of the Franks, by Gregory of Tours, not a single British name occurs.

The total oblivion into which Britain had fallen among the Greeks is still more extraordinary. Two centuries and a half after the legions of Britain had given to the empire the future founder of Constantinople; one century only after the final recall of the Romans; Procopius, the first historian of the lower

empire, consigns Britain to a place in the regions of prodigies and fables. He relates, that the souls of those who die in Gaul are nightly borne to the shores of that island, and delivered over to the infernal powers, by the boatmen of Friesland and Batavia. "These boatmen," says he, "see no one; but, in the dead of night, a terrible voice calls them to their mysterious office. They find by the shore strange and unknown boats ready to sail; they feel the weight of the souls which enter them, one after the other, till the gunwale of the boat sinks to a level with the water. Nevertheless, they still see nothing. The same night, they reach the coast of Britain. Another voice calls the ghosts one by one, and they land in silence." Such, after a short but total cessation of intercourse, was the only notion of England entertained by the rest of mankind.

Britain, however, in her isolation, had shared the fate of the other dismembered portions of the empire. The same struggle had arisen between the barbarians, and those who had caught civilization from their Roman masters. But neither the people, nor the circumstances which brought about the overthrow of the continental domination of Rome, were the same as those which caused the destruction of the system she had established in Britain; and if, in her progress from ancient to modern civilization, through barbarism, she underwent nearly the same changes, it is a proof that the fate of Europe was the consequence of internal organization, the operation of which was every where the same, and not of events which varied with each particular country.

This total separation of Britain from the rest of the world begins from the year 426 or 427, the supposed date of the departure of the last Roman legion from her shores. It ends, or at least becomes less distinct, from the time of the coronation of Alfred the Great, in 872. During these four centuries and a half, the chronicles of Britain contain a prodigious number of facts, of names of kings, of dates of battles; and, perhaps, a writer inspired by an intense spirit of nationality might succeed in imparting some interest to them.

But a foreigner is repelled by the frequency of revolutions ending in the most unimportant results, and can hardly be expected to undertake a labour which promises him no adequate recompense. Wherever history leads to the study of man as a moral and a social being; wherever it displays the development of his mind and character, the lofty play of sentiment and pas-

sion: narrowness of territorial bounds detracts nothing from the importance of the results to which it leads. The republics of Greece, the free cities of Italy, the cantons of Switzerland; in the bright and palmy days of their freedom, will doubtless teach us more as to what constitutes the happiness and the dignity of man, than those vast monarchies of Asia, where every error of the ruler decides the destiny of millions.

But the small British and Saxon kingdoms, which for four or five centuries existed simultaneously or successively in Britain, afford no field for the display of great qualities or heroic virtues. Nor are their records sufficiently detailed to bring us acquainted with individual character, or with the workings of human passions. Their history is almost conjectural; and even were we to devote this chapter to the repetition of all of it that has come down to us, we should but add to the already copious list of royal crimes, or furnish more disgusting pictures of the sufferings of humanity. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with such a glance over these five centuries as may enable us to catch its general features.

In the year 427, when the Romans abandoned Britain, they left it enervated, like all the other provinces of the empire; without fortifications, without arms, and without courage to use them, even had the natives possessed them. Instead of surrounding the open towns with strong fortifications, and organizing troops for their defence, the Britons had contented themselves with rebuilding the wall of Severus, which, intersecting the island at its narrowest point, was intended to arrest the incursions of the Picts and the Scots. But this wall, which might have done good service to regular troops, was of no use to citizens; men who, without quitting their daily occupations and their families, could, perhaps, have defended the ramparts of their cities, but who could not be expected to quit their homes, and post themselves at the foot of a distant fortification, whence they were constantly exposed to be driven. And, in fact, the Romans had hardly quitted the island, when the wall of Severus was passed by the Picts and Scots. The sole honour of these northern tribes, who were pastoral and entirely uncivilized, was the defiance of danger; their sole happiness, the robbery of their more industrious and more timid neighbours. They overran the whole of Britain several times; they devastated the country, laid the towns under contribution, and, finding no advantage in car-

rying home slaves to a country already over-peopled, they massacred all their captives.

The terror and the desolation of the Britons were extreme. The towns which preserved an appearance of civilization, although leagued together, had no means of defence; they implored succour of the Romans, already too much crippled by the calamities of the empire to afford them any protection. The rural districts, divided among a small number of rich proprietors, were become a sort of principalities; but a man who was owner of thousands of slaves, was not the more able to defend himself. We are assured, that one of these great proprietors, named Vortigern, was acknowledged chief, or king, by all the others, in the year 445. This new monarch is accused of being the first to call in the Saxon pirates as auxiliaries against the Scottish marauders.

The maritime Saxons of the mouths of the Elbe; the Jutes, the Angles, the Frieslanders, and other small nations of the same coasts, had long been in the habit of plundering the coasts of Gaul and Britain. Two of their chiefs, Hengist and Horsa, were received in 449 by Vortigern, in the Isle of Thanet, on the Kentish coast. They fulfilled their part of the treaty, by making a brave and effectual stand against the Scots: after having repulsed them, however, they invited their countrymen to cross over to them, and began to plunder those they had come to assist. Success soon inspired them with the project of subjugating the island.

Then began a struggle between the Britons and the Saxons, which lasted a century and a half, and which terminated in the extirpation of the British population, or its expulsion from the whole eastern side of the island. This struggle has been celebrated by the romancers of the Round Table, and by historians little superior to romancers in credibility. King Arthur, who is supposed to have died in 542, at the age of ninety, was the great British hero of these battles, in which Vortimer, Mordred, Uther Pendragon, and several others, also distinguished themselves. There is no reason to doubt the length and fury of the conflicts, the result of which was the expulsion of an entire nation from its ancient territory; but there are very sufficient grounds for skepticism as to the number of the armies and the importance of the battles recorded by old writers. The Saxons, as we have already seen, were subject, even in their own country, to as many

chiefs or kings as they occupied villages: in like manner they gave the name of king, or sea-king, to every captain of a ship equipped for piracy, who landed on the coast of Britain; and it is probable that Hengist had but a few hundred men under him during the thirty-five years of continued fighting, which left him master of Kent. Other Saxon, Anglian, and Jutish chieftains, established themselves at the same time in other parts of England.

The petty British lords, the ancient senators of the country, on their side, often assumed, or received from the Saxons, the title of kings. In either case the dominions of the monarch extended to a keep or castle in which he resided, and a few villages inhabited by his vassals and serfs. The traditions of their wars were preserved, and the vanity of the two parties combined to exaggerate their importance. These wars, far from being destructive to the population, taught the chieftain all the value of the multiplication of his vassals. He was too much in want of soldiers not to endeavour to increase their numbers. The Saxon population spread itself over the east of the island, the British over the west; and those of the latter, who, having inhabited the eastern part, could not escape into Wales, sought refuge from the fury of the Saxons in little Britain, or Bretagne, on the coast of France. At length, after two or three generations in succession had lived in a constant state of bloodshed, after every trace of civilization had been obliterated, after the language, and almost all the arts of the Romans had been forgotten, the island of Great Britain, which then began to bear the name of England, was divided into three parts.

To the east, seven independent kingdoms had been formed by the piratical people included under the common name of Anglo-Saxons. The three most extensive were to the north, and were inhabited by the Angles; the four richest and most populous were to the south, and inhabited by the Saxons. The three former were, the kingdom of Northumberland, founded in 547 by Ida; that of East Anglia, in 571, by Ulfa; and that of Mercia, in 585, by Erida.

The four Saxon kingdoms were those of Kent, founded in 460 by Hengist; of Sussex, in 491, by Ella; of Essex, in 527, by Erccenwin; and of Wessex, the most powerful of the southern kingdoms, in 519, by Cerdic. The opposite courses of the Thames and the Severn separated the Saxon kingdoms from those of the

Angles; nevertheless these two people regarded one another nearly as countrymen, and the seven kingdoms of the Saxon heptarchy formed, to some intents, but one single political body.

The kings whom the Saxons acknowledged as their leaders in war, had but a very limited authority in peace; and the assembly of the elders, or wise men, of each kingdom, the Witena-gemote, was consulted on all important measures, whether legislative or administrative. On some occasions one of the seven kings was acknowledged as chief of the heptarchy, and then a Witena-gemote of the seven kingdoms was convened to deliberate on the interests of the whole confederate body.

To the west, the ancient Britons, who belonged to the Cymri, one of the two grand divisions of the Celtic race, were limited within the district of Wales, which was divided into three petty kingdoms, and the western point of England, the kingdom of Cornwall. They had retained their original language, they were fervently attached to the Christian religion, and, for the performance of its rites and offices, had preserved some knowledge of the Latin language, and the use of writing,—at least among the clergy. But they had been able to keep up scarcely any communication with Rome; and when, after an interval of two centuries, they renewed their connexion with the rest of the church, they had considerable difficulty in submitting to the changes which had taken place in that primitive Christianity they had learned and maintained.

Welsh missionaries, and especially the elder St. Patrick, and his nephew of the same name, had converted Ireland at the end of the fifth century. As that was just the time of the greatest ravages of the Saxons, it is very probable that a great number of the more quiet and unwarlike Britons went to seek tranquillity in that island, which was less exposed to storms and convulsions, and carried with them a civilization which the sword was then destroying in Britian. The Irish, separated from the whole world, having enough for their maintenance, but scarcely acquainted with the luxuries of life, sought food for their activity in the study of sacred letters. This is the brilliant period of their literature; the period in which arose those pious men who undertook the conversion of Scotland, and who, a century later, went forth as missionaries into Germany and the forest of the Ardennes. They afterwards founded the convents of St. Gall, Luxeuil, Anégrai, and, lastly, of Bobbio, in Italy, where we are surprised to trace the footsteps of an Irish missionary, St. Colomban.

The northern extremity of Great Britain was always occupied by the Picts on the west, and the Scots on the east: these two nations were branches of the Gaelic tribe, another great division of the Celtic family. They had never been subjugated by the Romans, and had remained almost entirely ignorant of agriculture, and dependent on the produce of their herds; yet they had, if possible, retrograded in the career of civilization, since all the arts which soften or embellish life had been destroyed among their neighbours. Their incursions had long desolated Britain; but whether it be that their arms were inferior to those of the Saxons, who at the same time invaded the southern part of Scotland, or whether there was no longer any plunder to allure them onward in a country already so devastated, it seems certain that, after the middle of the fifth century, they desisted from their incursions. Their conversion to Christianity dates from about the same time, and was mainly brought about by the labours of Welsh and Irish missionaries. The Picts and the Scots continued to share Caledonia up to the year 839 or 840, when the Picts were defeated in two battles by the Scots, commanded by their king, Kenneth II., and were finally exterminated. The nation was utterly extinct, and the whole country took the name of Scotland.

It was not till the year 597, that Christianity was introduced anew among the Anglo-Saxons. England was at that time one of the greatest European markets for slaves; whenever the Saxons felt the pressure of want, they had no hesitation in selling their children. They were extremely numerous in France; Bathilde, queen of Clovis II., had herself been a Saxon slave bought by a Frank. Anglo-Saxon slaves were exposed to sale in the markets of Rome. On one occasion, Gregory the Great, afterwards pope, struck with the delicacy of their skins, and the beauty of their fair hair, asked of what nation they were. "They are Angles," (Angli,) said the merchant.—"Say rather angels,"* said Gregory.—"What is their birth-place?"—"Deiri in Northumberland."—"De irá? they must be rescued from the anger of God." Gregory's puns struck him as being a revelation, and he was no sooner seated in the papal chair than he took measures for the conversion of Britain. He intrusted this task to the monk Augustin, afterwards created first archbishop of Canterbury. This Roman priest set out, accompanied by forty missionaries, to whom

* "Non, imo, Angli sed Angeli."

England owed the knowledge of what was called Christianity in the sixth century; that is, of the religion which it suited the church to promulgate.

The conversion of England began with her kings, and the new faith descended to their subjects. It took root, and was established without persecution; nor was the change stained with the blood of a single martyr. The popular faith, if not very enlightened, was not the less lively; nor was it less efficacious in inclining those who embraced it to great sacrifices. A reputation for sanctity was easily obtained, especially by large donations to the church. It is, however, somewhat remarkable, that during the heptarchy, seven Anglo-Saxon kings, seven queens, eight princes, and sixteen princesses of the blood, received the honours of canonization. It is not less so, that, that in the same period of time, ten kings and eleven queens laid aside a crown to devote themselves to a monastic life.

The government of the Saxon heptarchy, or the independence of the seven little kingdoms into which England was divided, lasted three hundred and seventy-eight years, if we reckon from the foundation of the earliest; two hundred and forty-three, if we reckon from that of the most recent, up to the year 827, when the whole Anglo-Saxon people acknowledged the sovereign authority of Egbert.

This monarch had been driven from his hereditary kingdom of Wessex, and had taken refuge with Charlemagne, who had given him a friendly reception at his court, and had, probably, contributed to form his mind, and to elevate his views and his hopes. Egbert had passed twelve years in the society of the great monarch, when he was recalled from his court, in the year 800; the very year of the re-establishment of the Western empire, to take possession of the throne of Wessex,—the largest of the four southern kingdoms. By a series of successful wars, Egbert subjugated the three other Saxons kingdoms, and united them under the common name of Wessex. He, at the same time, compelled the Anglian kingdoms to promise him obedience, permitting them, however, to retain the government of their feudatory princes. Lastly, he compelled the three British kingdoms in Wales, and the fourth in Cornwall, also to do homage to him as their suzerain or head. He had been scarcely five years in the enjoyment of peace and of undisputed sovereignty, when the Danes appeared on the south of the island, with thirty-five vessels; landed

at Charmouth, met Egbert, defeated him, and loaded their vessels with all the portable wealth of the district, (A. D. 833.)

Charlemagne, at the summit of his power, had seen the Northmen brave him with impunity on the coasts of Friesland. He is said to have wept over the calamities which awaited his successors. Egbert, the imitator of Charlemagne on a smaller stage, witnessed the still more humiliating commencement of the misfortunes which were destined to afflict the kingdom he had founded.

Britain, totally separated as it was from the continent, experienced in the same manner the effects of the same cause. The incorporation of several smaller states into one monarchy, which seemed calculated to constitute its strength, was the source only of its weakness; and disgraceful calamities arose at the very moment in which the monarch thought he had founded the national power and glory. Each of the kingdoms which Charlemagne had conquered was able, single-handed, to keep its enemies in check; all together were no longer competent to do so after he had united them. Each of the petty kingdoms of the heptarchy had subsisted without fear of foreign invasion;—they fell before it, when they were consolidated into one empire. The Northmen or Danes, who made a simultaneous attack on the coasts of France and England, in the ninth century, had been long familiar with the coasts of Britain; for they were but another branch of the same people who had conquered it three centuries earlier. It appears, indeed, that the Anglo-Saxons of the fifth century came from the country lying between Friesland and Jutland, while the homes of the Norse conquerors of the ninth, reached from Jutland to Norway. The Jutes or inhabitants of Jutland, are mentioned at both periods; and, besides, the conquests of Charlemagne had driven back the southern upon the northern Saxons, so that the same people no longer issued from the same shores. From the time of the decline of the Roman empire, all these northern tribes lying on the sea, had addicted themselves to piracy, and exulted in those perilous expeditions in which they braved at once the fury of the northern tempest and the sword of the enemy. Yet so long as, in the countries they attacked, every little province had its chief, its councils, its warriors; so long as every district had its association of free and warlike citizens, resistance was always at hand; it was so prompt and efficacious that the Northmen were compelled to abandon piracy, as the Scots were marauding.

As soon, on the contrary, as every district was forced to appeal to a king whose seat of government was at a great distance, to implore his assistance, or to await his orders; as soon as every career open to ambition, transplanted men from their natal soil to the court;—so that what had been a centre became a mere province or appendage, and a man might make his fortune independent of all local calamities;—all those small kingdoms, which had been filled with armed men who had for centuries waged a desperate war of resistance against neighbours constantly endeavouring to invade them, were found incapable of defending themselves against a few handfuls of sea-robbers; and little crews of adventurers in open boats, attempted and achieved conquests in which thousands of brave men had failed.

In 835, two years after his defeat at Charmouth, Egbert avenged himself on the Danes. He defeated a fresh body of them who had landed at Hengston, on the coast of Cornwall. He died in 838, leaving only one son, Ethelwolf, who succeeded him.

If Egbert exhibits some points of comparison with his illustrious contemporary and friend Charlemagne,—the resemblance of Ethelwolf to Louis le Débonnaire is much more striking. Like him, he suffered his kindness to degenerate into weakness, and his religion into an abject submission to priests and monks: like him, he hastened to share his power with his son Athelstan, whom he created king of Kent; like him, at an advanced age, on his return from a pilgrimage to Rome, in 855, he married another Judith, a grand-daughter of the ambitious queen of Louis le Débonnaire: and this young wife embroiled him with his sons, by insinuating into their minds the fear of a fresh partition of his territory, Ethelbald, son of Ethelwolf, took arms against his father, and the good-natured (*débonnaire*) monarch of England left behind him, at his death, in 857, a divided empire and a tottering throne.

Several of these coincidences are accidental, no doubt; but some are dependant on the nature of things. A great man arising in the midst of barbarians perceives the advantages of a liberal education, and endeavours to procure them for his children; but in such an age he can find no instructors in science but pedants; and it was in fact to monastic pedants that the training of Ethelwolf and Louis le Débonnaire was confined: both were born in luxury and surrounded by flattery; both degenerated, as the sons of great men so often degenerate; and the fruit of the tree of

knowledge, which had nourished and strengthened their fathers, turned to poison in their hands. They learned to believe upon mere assertion; to tremble before a man; to expiate crimes by penances; and, even at an advanced period of life, to contract disproportionate marriages, in order to secure themselves against temptation.

Ethelwolf, like Louis le Débonnaire, left four sons; but the custom of dividing the monarchy among the princes of the blood had not gained ground among the Saxons. Ethelbald, to whom during his lifetime he had made over the kingdom of Kent, and Ethelbert, to whom he left all the rest of his kingdom, alone succeeded him. It was, however, established, that the four brothers should succeed each other, to the exclusion of children under age; and they did, in fact, reign in succession—Ethelbald, from 857 to 860; Ethelbert, from 857 to 866; Ethelred, from 866 to 871; and Alfred the Great, from 871 to 900. The whole of this period, like that embracing the reigns of the four sons of Louis le Débonnaire, is filled with the disastrous invasions of the Danes.

The adventurers who issued forth from all the coasts of Scandinavia, from all the ports of the Baltic, and who, though differing in language and in origin, were all comprehended under the common name of Danes in England, and of Normans in France, seemed to have formed different projects on these two countries. The coasts and the courses of the rivers of France accessible to their boats, were still enriched by the effects of a long established civilization and industry. Capital accumulated in the preceding centuries was still deposited there; indeed, it had increased during the reign of Charlemagne. On the other hand, the people all along the coasts were total strangers to the Germanic races, nearly unarmed, and wholly unwarlike in their habits; they could hardly oppose any resistance, nor did the Normans seem to have any other object than to plunder them. England was poorer and more warlike. It had no wealth wherewith to tempt the northern freebooter but that of its fields, which its brave and warlike population was ready to defend. The Danes, therefore, when they attacked England, aimed at conquest rather than at spoil. During the reigns of Ethelwolf and Ethelbald, they made some descents on the coasts; but their reception was such as to convince them that the gains of such incursions were not likely to be proportioned to their danger; and from the year 840 to 860, years so disastrous to France, the shores of England were

but rarely attacked. But the profits of the profession of corsair, the glory and the risks of these expeditions, soon attracted to the ports of Denmark adventurers from every part of the North.

It was a new channel into which the torrent of emigration forced itself; and the tribes which had been wont to send forth swarms to invade the empire by land, now launched them upon the deep. Bands of Northmen ravaged France from side to side; they made descents on the coasts of Spain and Portugal, which they disputed with the Saracens; they penetrated into the Mediterranean, and the mouths of the Rhone received the barks of Drontheim. The Danes appear to have conceived the project of conquering the island of Great Britain, which, by its contiguity to the scene of their spoliation, would afford a convenient receptacle for their booty, enable them to refit their vessels, or furnish them with new ships, and with hands for their service. About the year 860, they renewed their attacks upon England with the barbarity with which they carried on all their wars, but also with a persistency, with a determination to gain a settlement in the country, which is not perceptible in their invasions of France.

It was on the shores of the feudatory kingdom of Northumberland, that Iwar, one of the sons of the Danish lord Rægnar Lodbrog, made a descent with a formidable army. It is affirmed, that he had been invited and introduced into the country by an earl Bruen, whose wife had been dishonoured by one of the Northumbrian kings; while the other sovereign of their little country had exasperated the vengeance of the Danes by an act of cruelty worthy of his age. Having taken Rægnar Lodbrog prisoner, he had cast him into a deep pit filled with serpents, and left him there to die. The death-song composed by Rægnar in this appalling situation, became the war-song of his countrymen, and has come down to us.

The two kings of Northumberland, till then at variance, now vainly united to oppose their terrible enemy: they were defeated, the one before York, the other at Ellescross; the country was ravaged with atrocious cruelty; those taken in arms found no mercy, and the priests and monks, who affected to work miracles, and whom the Danes regarded as formidable enchanters, were not treated with less inhumanity. The nuns had still worse evils to dread. The abbess of Coldingham, having to announce to the sisterhood over which she presided, that the Danes were at

hand, and that they were without defence, set them the example of the only means of escaping outrage. She cut off her nose and upper lip, to render herself an object of horror and disgust to the conquerors. The Danes rushed into the convent; but meeting only bleeding and mutilated faces, they recoiled in terror. Too savage, however, to be touched with the courage of these unhappy women, they shut the gates of the convent, and kindled a fire around it, in which all their victims perished.

The Danes also laid waste the kingdom of Mercia; they conquered that of East Anglia, and its feudatory king, Edmund, who was regarded as a saint, was massacred by them in a place which still bears his name—St. Edmund's Bury, or Burg. These three kingdoms, whose kings were vassals of Ethelred, were much more extensive than his hereditary sovereignty of Wessex, situated to the south of the Thames and the Severn. This latter country, however, the capital of which was Winchester, was much more populous, richer, and, consequently, more important than all the others combined.

The Danes had not merely pillaged Northumberland; they had established colonies there, partitioned out lands, and a part of their families had betaken themselves to the peaceful occupations of husbandry; circumstances which seem to prove, that from their very first campaign their intention was not only, as in France, to carry off plunder, but to make themselves masters of the soil. Iwar, however, in order to secure himself the more firmly in his conquest, proceeded to attack Ethelred in the kingdom of Wessex. Nine furious and sanguinary battles were fought between the invaders and the invaded in the course of a single year. The English defended themselves like brave men, and their king proved himself worthy to command them. But numbers at length prevailed over their obstinate courage; and in the last of these battles, A. D. 872, Ethelred was killed.

On the death of Ethelred, the fourth brother, Alfred, ascended the throne of Wessex, to the exclusion of the sons of his predecessor; whether, according to the will of his father, who is said to have thus determined the succession, or, whether, from the choice of the people, who felt that, in a crisis of such peril, they needed a man, and not a child to govern them, is not certainly known. The Danes were now masters of three of the most ancient kingdoms: they had, it is true, delegated their sceptres to English kings, whom they held in a state of dependence: but

this was merely in order not to reveal too broadly to the original population the servitude into which they had fallen; to preserve for a time the forms of a national government after the substance was destroyed. These kings were useful to the Danes in sanctioning their usurpations; in legalizing their levies of money; and perhaps, still more, in rendering odious a government which it was their object to overthrow. The inhabitants of the provinces, indeed, were not long in perceiving that these phantoms of royalty, the slaves and tools of their conquerors, were a burden, and not a protection to them. Oppressed as they were by the Danish yoke, they demanded that at least it might be the only one laid upon them. Their prayer was readily heard, and acceded to by Iwar and Ubba, the sons of Rægner Lodbrog. The feudatory kings to the north of the Thames were suppressed. The Danes mingled with the Saxons as cultivators of the soil, and as fellow-countrymen; all the cities were open to them: even London, which then belonged to the kingdom of Mercia, fell into their power; whilst their armies penetrated Wessex, which, at that time, reached from the shores of Kent to the borders of Cornwall, on every side.

Alfred, having been defeated by the Danes in a battle, had signed a treaty, by which he bound himself to give no assistance to the counties north of the Thames and the Severn, on condition that he was to be left in undisturbed possession of those to the south of those rivers. But no treaty could be binding on the bands of independent adventurers who every spring quitted their northern shores, and who gloried in the cruelties they inflicted on the inhabitants of more temperate climes. New chieftains, who had no connexion with the sons of Rægner Lodbrog, surprised and pillaged Wareham, laid siege to Exeter, which they likewise plundered, gave battle seven times in one year (A. D. 876,) to king Alfred, and thus awakened in the Danes, settled in the north of the island, the hope of conquering the whole of England. The colonists accordingly broke the peace they had sworn to: the possession of London secured them a safe passage over the Thames, in 877 they entered Wessex, took Chippenham, one of its largest towns, and thus struck such terror into the English, that Alfred, who strove to assemble his army, found himself suddenly deserted by all his warriors. As the only means of escaping from death or captivity, he assumed the disguise of a poor labourer, and sought refuge and concealment in

the hut of a shepherd in the marches of Somersetshire. It was built on a small plot of solid ground, not above two acres in extent, and approachable only by a difficult and almost imperceptible path through a sedgy morass. This small patch of land was afterwards illustrious as the asylum of the noble warrior, and was thence called Ætheling-ey, or the Noble Island.

The man who lay hidden from every eye in Ætheling-ey,—who was known only to his host, and was regarded by his hostess as an equal, or rather inferior, whom she scolded when he suffered her cakes to burn,—was worthy to save England, and to restore the monarchy. He was nearly thirty years of age; his countenance was handsome, noble, and intrepid; his skill in all bodily exercises, his dexterity in shooting with the bow, would have sufficed, united as they were with consummate bravery, to obtain for him a distinguished rank as a mere soldier. The sweetness and benevolence which characterized all his intercourse with men endeared him to all who came near him: he had successfully cultivated poetry and music; and his mind, fostered by the early care of an enlightened mother, was enlarged and adorned by study to a degree unknown among his contemporaries.

All these qualities, however, do not suffice to form a hero; they raise an individual to one of the highest steps in a scale which all may endeavour to climb; but the force of character and of will, the clear judgment which decides what is needed for a nation, the creative genius which finds the means of producing it, are the qualities which alone can constitute a great king; and these Alfred united in a supreme degree. He passed six months in his profound retreat—his very existence unknown to the whole world—deprived of all the conveniences of life; nor, during this long interval of apparently hopeless inaction, did he ever give himself up to despondency. He polished his bow, and kept his arms in order for the field, and he waited with patience and confidence the fit moment to emerge from his obscurity.

The Saxons, who, in all their battles, had shown that they were worthy to have a country, were, indeed, struck with panic terror; they were dispersed, but not crushed. They had shrunk from engaging again in disastrous and hopeless conflicts; but most of them had retreated into castles or towers which they had built for their defence, or into fastnesses in woods or marshes; and if some had bent their necks to the yoke, and had yielded them-

selves up to the Danes, Alfred was convinced that they would not long endure the vexations with which they would be harassed. He waited the first outbreak of their impatience; he thought that it is sometimes expedient to leave the whole intolerable weight of tyranny to press for awhile on a people, that it may no longer be disposed to grudge the high price, the cruel sacrifices, by which alone deliverance can be bought.

Alfred's expectations were not deceived. The Danes had dispersed themselves over the whole kingdom of Wessex, in order to subdue every part of it; but Ubba II., son of Rægnar Lodbrog, learning that a party of English had shut themselves up in the fort of Kenwith, in the county of Devon, marched a division of his troops to besiege it. The assailants had so greatly the advantage in point of numbers—their enemies seemed so prostrated by a series of disasters—that Ubba scarcely thought it worth while to be on his guard against them. The besieged had not the slightest hope of succour from any quarter; they looked for nothing but death or slavery. The earl of Devon, who commanded them, proposed to surprise the enemy by a sortie, and to try to open to themselves a passage to some place of refuge, sword in hand. This desperate project was crowned with far better success than the earl himself had dared to hope. The Danes were so little on their guard, that Ubba their general was killed. The Raven, the great standard to which they believed the fate of their nation mysteriously attached, was taken, and the whole army fled disgracefully.

Alfred, instructed of their defeat, deemed that the moment for emerging from concealment had arrived. He called his chief friends about him; and after having concerted all his measures, he sent them to various places where he knew that there were parties of Saxons under arms: he fixed a day for their general meeting in the forest of Selwood, in Somersetshire; and, while his very existence was wholly unsuspected by the Danes, he slung his harp over his shoulder, and went to the camp which Guthrum, the Danish general, had assembled, and entered it alone. All the nations of the North held music in honour, and admitted bards or singers to their banquets. The ancient Britons, however, claimed a pre-eminence above all others as poets and musicians; and the Welsh bards traversed hostile armies, and went unharmed amid the horrors of war, collecting the voluntary contributions of the soldiers. Alfred yielded to no one in musical skill, or in talent

for extempore versification: his harp secured him entrance to the enemy's camp; he was received without distrust, admired, and rewarded; and after carefully observing every thing, he went to meet his countrymen in the forest of Selwood.

The Saxons, inspired with new life and courage at the sight of their beloved prince, who seemed to rise from the dead to lead them, fell upon the camp of Guthrum, who did not even suspect the existence of a Saxon army: nearly all the Danes were cut to pieces. Guthrum, and the small band of followers who escaped, were soon besieged in a fortress; where, hopeless of being able long to hold out, they accepted the terms of peace which were offered them.

Alfred granted to all who consented to become Christians, the privilege of residing in East Anglia; the others were permitted to leave the country, under a promise of seeking their fortune elsewhere. Those of the Danes who had their wives and children with them, and had established themselves in England, intermingled with the Saxons, whose language so nearly resembled their own that they might almost regard them as fellow countrymen. These had already begun to lend an ear to the Christian missionaries; and their conversion, sincere or feigned, seemed to meet with no great obstacles. The young men, however,—the more ardent spirits,—could not bring themselves, in consequence of one check, to renounce a life of piracy and pillage which had such attractions for them, and which formed so essential a part of the national character. Just at this crisis, the Continent, given over to a frightful state of anarchy, seemed to invite their arms. Charles the Bald died on the 6th of October, 877; the Carlovingian princes who had shared his states, at variance with each other, and despised by their subjects, were attacked by reiterated fits of illness, which disabled them from taking any measures of defence. Hastings, after having measured himself against Alfred without success, led over to France the greater part of those Danes who had so long desolated England. Troops of these terrific adventurers landed in the mouths of all the rivers, from the Garonne to the Scheldt; others, recent from the North, took the same route; and for twelve years the shores of England were unvisited by their cruellest foes.

Alfred took advantage of this season of repose to organize his future defence. The kingdom of Wessex had remained his in undisputed sovereignty; but Guthrum, with his consent, had re-

tired into East Anglia, and the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk were almost entirely peopled by Danes. Others of their countrymen occupied Mercia; others Northumberland, to which Alfred at that time did not even think of laying claim. The limit of his conquests to the northward was the city of London; which, it seems, he became master of about the year 880, and intrusted the government of it to his son-in-law, earl Ethelred. He had, however, lost no time in organizing the troops of Wessex, giving them able officers, building strong places at all points well adapted for the defence of the country, and, above all, building ships of war. His predecessors had trusted to their troops alone for the defence of the coasts; and the enemy, by threatening several distant points, harassed them with fatigue, gained upon them in point of speed, and eventually always effected a landing in a point where no preparation had been made. The Danish vessels were fitted only for transport. As theirs were the only ships then on the seas, they were not armed; they carried war across the sea, but they had never made the sea the theatre of war: Alfred probably imitated the construction of the galleys of the Greek empire which he had seen in Italy. His vessels had by this time an indisputable advantage over those of the Danes; they never met without the certain destruction of the latter. It was by means of these ships of war that Alfred secured the tranquillity of Wessex. In 893, Hastings made another attempt upon it, and landed on the coast of Kent with a powerful army. Alfred, however, aided by his fleet, so completely routed him, that he appears to have relinquished for ever the desire of disturbing the repose of England. He retreated, accompanied not only by all the troops he had brought over, but also by all he could collect in East Anglia, Mercia, and Northumberland. These three large districts, weakened by the departure of all their youthful and warlike population, no longer hesitated to acknowledge the authority of Alfred. For the last seven years of his life, he reigned alone in England.

The English are fond of ascribing to this great and excellent monarch, either the institution or the confirmation of the laws, privileges, and usages which have tended the most to their prosperity as a nation. We have seen that he was the founder of their navy—that he was the first to perceive and the first to prove, that it was in these wooden walls that the people of England ought to put their trust. With him also arose the grandeur

and prosperity of the city of London, which he almost invariably chose as the place of meeting of the annual parliament, or Wite-na-gemote, with which he always discussed the affairs of the nation. What was the composition of this assembly, at which prelates, earls or aldermen, thanes or barons, and perhaps deputies from different burghs, or associations of free men, were present, has been, and will, probably, remain, a subject of controversy.

According to the principles and customs of the northern nations, every free man had, as matter of course, a share in the sovereignty; but by far the greater part of the population were without either power or freedom. The ceorls, kerls, churls, or in Roman phrase, vileins, were held by their lords in a state of vassalage which amounted to almost absolute dependency; lower still, the bond-slaves or serfs were not masters even of their own persons. Neither class was supposed to have any rights as citizens, nor any voice in public affairs: neither could be represented in parliament.

Alfred caused a fresh publication of the Saxon laws. This collection contained those of Ina, king of Wessex, Offa, king of Mercia, Ethelbert, king of Kent; to these he added about forty others, framed or sanctioned by himself. Like the Carlovingian kings, he inserted several laws taken from the Judaical ritual into his statutes, as if to give new strength and cogency to the precepts of morality. The Saxon laws, like those of all the people of the North, established the compensation of crimes or offences by pecuniary mulct, according to a regulated scale. The English are also fond of tracing in them the first indications of the glory of their island—trial by jury.

The judges underwent at the same time a severe reform. It is difficult to see how the state of dependence on the monarch, to which Alfred reduced this order of men, could be reconciled with liberty. We are only told that Alfred hanged forty-four of them in one year for crimes of malversation.

The division of England into counties or shires, (*i. e.* shares,) appears to have been one of the first acts of the Saxons after their conquest. This was, indeed, but a transplantation of Germanic institutions into their adopted country. The counts or earls, civil or military officers holding under the king, and presiding over the shire meetings, are mentioned from the very earliest times of the Heptarchy. Alfred, however, reformed the

division of the counties, and made it more regular and equable throughout the kingdom. For the government of them he associated another officer to the earl, called the sheriff, or shire-reeve, often mentioned under the title of viscount. He confirmed and cemented the system of corporations, which placed all the citizens, in their several relations to society, reciprocally under the guarantee of each other, by forming a burgh or association of ten free householders, with a tithing man at their head; and uniting ten of these associations into a hundred, under another head; and all the hundreds of each county under its respective earl. Each of these bodies was responsible for the conduct of all its members, and, in virtue of this responsibility, exercised over them a right of inspection and of police; but if the criminal was not discovered, the responsibility fell on the association of the superior degree. The king demanded an account of every breach of the peace, first, of the tithing; next, of the hundred; and, in the last resort, of the county. The universal disorganization of society—the infinite number of robbers and outlaws who infested all parts of the kingdom—had compelled Alfred to adopt this rigorous system of police; but even in its vigilance we recognise respect for the rights of freemen. It was not a system under which magistrates, the creatures of despotic power, ruled their inferiors: equals exercised a supervision over equals, and public order was committed to the maintenance of the citizens.

The cultivation of letters, which had been absolutely destroyed at the first invasion of the Saxons, and had since made but few and languid steps towards revival, was the object of Alfred's peculiar care. He complained, that, from the Thames to the Humber, there was not a priest who understood the service he had to recite; and from the Thames to the sea—the part of the kingdom in which letters were a little more cultivated—there was not one who could translate the easiest Latin book into Saxon. Alfred was very superior to his clergy in erudition, and understood well the ancient language used by the church; but he had the good sense and good taste to wish to cultivate the vernacular tongue. He, therefore, applied himself to the translation of several books into Saxon: among them are “Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*,” and the Ecclesiastical History of the Venerable Bede, a Saxon author of the early part of the eighth century. Alfred likewise founded schools at Oxford,

which are regarded as the first origin of that celebrated university. He invited from all parts of Europe, the learned men whom he thought best qualified to train and instruct youth; and he set aside a considerable portion of the revenues of his domains for the payment of their salaries, or the maintenance of poor scholars who followed their teaching.

After having thus gloriously devoted his life to the defence, the deliverance, the improvement, and the prosperity of his country, Alfred died in the year 900, at the age of fifty-two, after a reign of twenty-eight years and a half. Nor can we discover in his character or conduct, as delineated by writers who have handed down to us tolerably copious details of his life, a vice, or even a fault, which can stain or sully so pure, so lofty, so spotless a reputation.

CHAPTER XXII.

Historical Darkness of the tenth Century.—Decline of the Khaliphate of Bagdad.—Introduction of the Turks.—Creation of the office of Emir al Omara.—Greek Empire.—Macedonian Dynasty.—Basil I.—Assassination of Michael III.—Compilation of the Basilica.—Léo the Philosopher.—Constantine Porphyrogenitus.—His Works.—Refusal of the Greek Emperors to acknowledge those of the West.—Berenger King of Italy.—His Murder.—Independence of Italian Nobles.—Rudolf II. of Burgundy.—Hugues Count of Provence.—Surrender of Lombardy to Otho the Great.—Charles the Simple crowned King of France.—Insubordination of the great Nobles.—Robert, Count of Paris and Duke of France.—His Revolt and Death.—Rudolf of Burgundy.—Betrayal, Imprisonment, and Death of Charles the Simple.—Cession of Neustria to the Normans.—Baptism and Marriage of Rollo, first Duke of Normandy.—Introduction of the Feudal System into Normandy.—Rigorous Justice of Rollo.—Rapid Disappearance of the Norse Tongue.—Cessation of predatory Habits.—Saracen Settlements in France and Italy.—Irruption of the Magyars.—Emperor Arnulf.—Louis IV.—Increased Power of German Nobles.—Charles the Simple, last of the illegitimate Carlovingians.—Emperor Conrad of Franconia succeeded by Henry of Saxony.—His Ability and Bravery.—His total Defeat of the Hungarians. A. D. 900—936.

THE history of the tenth century, a brief survey of which we are now about to lay before our readers, is far more difficult to reduce to any general character, or to present under any general point of view, than any of the preceding. If we cast our eyes over the whole theatre of the world, we find neither a great empire influencing its neighbours, and giving a sort of unity to contemporaneous history, nor a great simultaneous movement in the minds of men. On every side, states seem to be falling into dissolution; on every side, portions are detaching themselves from the mass; dependants or subordinates are throwing off their allegiance to their superiors. Kings no longer do homage to the emperor as their liege lord; emirs disclaim the authority of the khaliph; dukes and counts declare themselves independent of kings; cities and lords of burghs or castles shut their gates against dukes and counts. Where we have hitherto seen only the impulse communicated to the several members of one great body, we now remark convulsive movements which are clearly not directed by its will.

It is difficult to distinguish whether it was only a passive resistance that nations opposed to their governments, or whether

we can trace the development of a new and active will; nor can we gather any light on this matter from the contemporary historians. Almost all the annals of the foregoing periods close; almost all the chroniclers desert us; scarcely can an age be mentioned more barren in historical documents.

Yet were it a mistake to conclude that Europe was retrograding towards barbarism. There was, on the contrary, an important progress in manners, institutions, intelligence, and population. But the same difficulty in gaining any general views of the history of the period, which we of the present day feel, was still more insurmountable to contemporaries. Those who had the talent of writing (and there were several) could not succeed in obtaining information as to what was passing among their neighbours,—so scanty and interrupted were the means of communication; and, on the other hand, the rise of provincial dynasties, or of free communities, was still too recent for them to assume the rank of subjects worthy the dignity of history. Historians still turned their eyes towards the Empire, which had ceased to exist; and overlooked those infant states which had hardly struggled into existence. We shall turn our attention successively to all the portions of this system of the world, whose rise and progress we have hitherto watched.

We shall not, however, endeavour to follow out the decline of the empire of the khaliphs. The frequent revolutions of the throne of Bagdad ceased to have any influence on the rest of the world; in each successive reign, some province detached itself from the ancient monarchy, some new dynasty sprang into existence, and some fresh matter was afforded for what Orientals take for history,—namely, the chronology of princes. To them, indeed, it is but an index to the parricides and fratricides of each reign, or to battles followed by the desolation of certain provinces; without the slightest advancement in the human species towards a better government, towards a stronger guarantee for its rights, towards a greater development of its faculties.

The loading the memory with the names of a host of princes, to which not a single useful or interesting idea can be attached, is but a waste of time and an abuse of learning. One remarkable change only, connected with the decline of these sovereigns of Bagdad, who daily saw new provinces escape from their grasp, deserves a cursory mention. They had remarked the decline of enthusiasm, the falling off in the courage, and even of the bodily

strength, of their own subjects, from the time that all noble objects had ceased to be presented to their ambition or their activity. Motassem, the twenty-seventh khaliph, who died in 842, had endeavoured to supply this want, by sending to Turkestan to purchase young slaves bred in the mountain region of Caucasus, whom he trained to the profession of arms, and formed into a guard, to which he intrusted the protection of his palace. These troops soon became numerous and formidable; the rivalry which existed between them and the Syrians effectually disgusted the latter with the military career, and the Turks were soon the only soldiers of the khaliphs. The slavery in which they had been reared rendered them less faithful, without being more submissive or obedient. From this time, most of the revolutions in Syria were their work. They hurled from the throne, or they assassinated, those khaliphs who were not the obsequious tools of their insolence and rapacity. At length, in the year 936, in the reign of Radhi, the thirty-ninth khaliph, they elected a chief of their own body, whom they called Emir al Omara (or Chief of Chiefs:) this officer was henceforward the true sovereign of the state; he alone disposed of the treasure, the troops, the offices of power or dignity; he kept the khaliph a prisoner in his own palace—reducing him to that life of poverty, penitence, and prayer, which the early successors of Mahommed had imposed on themselves by choice: nor did he even respect his life, if there was any caprice of the chief or of the soldiers which the commander of the faithful found it impossible to gratify. The Emir al Omara of Bagdad has sometimes been compared to the *maire du palais*, who was the virtual ruler of France under the kings of the first race. The origin of the power of the two officers was, however, very different, and its abuse was more violent and more cruel on the part of the Turk than on that of the Austrasian; though the thralldom of the legitimate sovereign to his minister presents some features of resemblance.

We shall also bestow but a transitory glance on the empire of the East, which was daily becoming more wholly separated from our portion of Europe; daily forgetting more and more that Latin world by which it was daily more and more forgotten. The people who inherited the two illustrious names of Greek and Roman had preserved no vestige of the sentiments or character of Greece and of Rome. The living generation seemed to be conscious that it was not worthy to occupy the attention of posterity;

and though it continued to study the works of the mighty and illustrious dead, it neglected to leave any record of present events. Yet the empire had acquired some fresh vigour from the accession of the Macedonian dynasty to the throne. Basil, the founder of that dynasty, was invested with the purple on the 24th of September, 867; he reigned until 886. He was succeeded by his son, Leo the Philosopher, who reigned from 886 to 911; and his grandson, Constantine VII. Porphyrogenitus, from 911 to 959. The former merited some reputation as a legislator; the second and the third distinguished themselves as writers.

Basil pretended to be a descendant of the Arsacides of Armenia, and to be allied, through his wife, to the line of the ancient kings of Macedonia. Nevertheless, his family had been reduced by the ravages of the Bulgarians to great poverty: nor had he owed his rise from among the servants of the imperial palace to any qualities more elevated than his address in training horses, his physical strength, and his courage. But in despotic governments, where the monarch alone has the power of distinguishing or rewarding merit, and where public opinion is mute, a valet, having nearer access to his sovereign, has a greater chance of obtaining influence than the governor of a province; and domestic services are often the road to the highest dignities. Basil made his way from the stable to the council of state. The more surprising fact is, that he was worthy of his elevation. Michael III., son of Theophilus, at length granted him the title of Augustus. The favour of a prince addicted to every possible vice could be no recommendation: the assassination of this same prince by Basil, who owed his elevation entirely to him, threw the stain of ingratitude over the character of the new sovereign. Yet no sooner was Basil seated on the throne, than he merited the respect and attachment of his subjects by his application to business, by the vigour of his judgment, by the order which he established in the finances and in the administration of the empire. He even found means to reorganize the army, although he had not received a military education. The Musulmans no longer menaced the provinces of the Levant: the Bulgarians, at the same epoch, had become converts to Christianity, and had laid aside their fierce and warlike habits with their idolatry. From this time their monarchy continued to decline, so that the Thracian provinces of the empire enjoyed an unwonted repose, repaired their losses, and, under Basil's fostering care, agriculture and commerce

flourished anew. He took advantage of the civil wars which distracted the Western empire, and the divisions of the Lombards of Benevento, to make new conquests in southern Italy. The Calabrias and Puglia submitted to his authority; and the city of Bari, the residence of a governor named the Captain, was the capital of the province which the Greeks called the Theme of Lombardy. The Latin tongue, though entirely disused in the East for every other purpose, still remained that of the laws. Already, it is true, the Novels, or the edicts of the emperors, posterior to the publication of Justinian's Code, were published in Greek as well as in Latin. Basil thought it was time for the government to drop a language which was not understood by its subjects. He caused a new compilation of the laws of the empire to be made in Greek: they were divided into forty books, called the Basilica. This code he substituted for that of Justinian, and it continued in force throughout the empire up to the period of its fall. The Greeks, indeed, continued to regard it as the rule of their actions even after they fell under the yoke of the Turks,

The reign of Leo, son of Basil, and pupil of the patriarch Photius, is scarcely marked by any event save his disputes with his clergy on the subject of his last marriage: it was the fourth, and the Greek church did not permit any man to marry more than thrice. He owed the title of Philosopher to several works composed by him, or, at any rate, under his name, on most of the sciences cultivated by the ancient Greeks. His son Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who was scarcely six years old when he succeeded him, was governed, first by guardians, and then by colleagues, who seized the purple by violence. Estranged from the business of the state, and almost a prisoner in his palace, no less from the weakness of his health than from the distrust of Romanus Lecapenus, whom the army had elected as his associate, he devoted all his time to literature and art; and his voluminous compilations may be regarded as the depository of almost all the Greek learning and science of his time. We may infer from his works, that if they were still in possession of the discoveries of their ancestors, they had lost all original genius, all fertility of invention, all power of observation.

While the new empire of the West was at the summit of its power under Charlemagne and Louis le Débonnaire, the Eastern emperors had not disdained to recognise them as colleagues.

But the greatness of the Carlovingian house had been of short duration; and Basil the Macedonian disputed the claim of Louis II., son of Lothaire, and sovereign of Italy, to the title of emperor, which his power no longer seemed to justify. The successors of Louis appeared to the Greeks still less worthy to be compared to their monarchs. A question of this nature is difficult to decide, where it is impossible to point out what are the real grounds of pre-eminence. The Latin emperor differed in nothing from the other kings of his race: he had no authority over them, though he assumed superiority of rank; nor is it easy to say what constituted an emperor, unless it were the fact of having placed on his head the crown of gold which the pope kept at Rome. This crown was granted successively, in 891, to Guido duke of Spoleto, and his son Lambert; in 895, to Arnulf king of Germany; in 900, to Louis, son of Boson, king of Provence; and, in 915, to Berenger, duke of Friuli and king of Italy. Each of these coronations had been the consequence of the arrival of a monarch at Rome at the head of an army. The popes had shown but slight repugnance to sanction what force had gained. Rapid revolutions had repeatedly changed the sovereignty of Italy. They were universally attributed to the jealousy which the high aristocracy felt of royal power. Of the three grand divisions of the empire of the Carlovingians—Italy, Gaul, and Germany—the former was the one in which the dukes, the governors of provinces, and the leaders of armies, were the most influential. From the times of the Lombard conquerors, they had perpetuated their dignities in their families; they were, in fact, become petty sovereigns; they had considerable revenues, and devoted soldiers; their fiefs were of great extent, and the population on them was once more become considerable: they knew that emperors and kings regarded them with jealousy; and, in order to limit the power of the throne, their constant policy had been to divide their suffrages between the two competitors, that the actual sovereign, seeing himself threatened by a rival, might always feel the necessity of buying their support by the concession of new privileges.

Berenger, duke of Friuli, proclaimed king of Italy in 888, and emperor in 915, had worn the Italian crown for sixteen years without a rival. In the year 905, he took the emperor Louis of Provence prisoner; and as a punishment for the violation of a preceding treaty by that prince, he had caused his eyes to be put

out; after which he sent him back to his kingdom of Provence, which Louis, now surnamed the Blind, governed for eighteen years. Berenger, notwithstanding this act of inhumanly rigid justice, had been much more frequently distinguished for his magnanimity and his forgiveness of injuries than for his severity. Of all the princes who had risen on the ruins of the throne of the Carolingians, he was the one who had merited in the highest degree the respect and the love of his subjects. He had re-awakened the military spirit of his kingdom, and had displayed no less talent for civil administration than for war. Lastly, he had shown those private virtues,—that generosity, that frankness, that confidence in the loyalty and honour of others,—which win the heart and elevate the soul of all who come under their influence. But the turbulent nobles of Italy, always jealous of the royal authority, dreaded the loss of their privileges, if they had to defend them against a king who possessed the affections of his people. They looked out for a rival among the Frankic princes; they offered the crown to Rudolf II. king of Transjuran Burgundy, who, for about two years, (from 923 to 925,) united the government of Italy to that of Switzerland. The civil wars they stirred up, laid open their country to the ravages of the Hungarians. Berenger defeated both his barbarian invaders and his rivals; but it was only to fall under the dagger of an assassin armed by the same faction. Rudolf II. was very soon abandoned by those who had invited him. Hugh, count of Provence, was raised to the throne, in his place, in 926. For half a century, Italy had been a prey to factions which were not animated by any true spirit of liberty; they sprang rather from the ambition of haughty nobles who could not brook submission to any regular government, and who preferred a foreign monarch solely because he was farther from them. At length, fatigued and exhausted by their animosities and struggles, she yielded herself up, though unconquered, as a dependency of the crown of Germany. The submission of the kingdom of Lombardy to Otho the Great was not the consequence of weakness, or of want of courage in the soldiery; still less was it the result of any claim which the Saxon monarch could establish to the crown. It was the fatal effect of the independence to which the high aristocracy had attained in this country, above any other; the effect of the greatness, the power, and the ambition of such nobles as the marquesses of Tuscany, the dukes of Spoleto and Friuli, the

marquesses of Ivrea, and other great lords, who sacrificed the independence of their country to jealousy of their countrymen, and to the desire of concealing their encroachments from the monarch, whom it was therefore inconvenient to have near at hand.

The second of the countries detached from the Western empire—Gaul, or France—was that of which, in the tenth century, the strength was the most completely broken, the European importance the most completely destroyed. After the death of king Eudes, count of Paris, the crown had been restored to Charles, the posthumous son of Louis the Stammerer. He was anointed and crowned at Rheims, with the consent of the nobles of Neustria, at the beginning of the year 898; but if, on the one side, the people saw with pleasure the sole offspring of the house of Charlemagne seated on the throne of his ancestors; on the other, their attachment was soon cooled by the profound incapacity of this young man, to whom they gave the surname of the Simple. Incapable of conducting himself, or of distinguishing friends from enemies, he fell into the hands of successive favourites, whom chance brought around his person, and who used his name as a cover for their own acts of injustice and oppression. A man of low birth, named Haganon, who had gained his confidence, excited the special resentment of the Franks by his imprudent rapacity; and, in the end, occasioned the ruin of his master.

The authority of Charles was already greatly circumscribed. Not only did four other princes in Gaul, besides himself, bear the title of king,—those of Lorraine, Transjurane Burgundy, Provence, and Bretagne; but even in his kingdoms of Aquitaine and of Neustria, puissant dukes and counts—those of Burgundy, Toulouse, Vermandois, Poitiers, and Aquitaine—governed their dominions with absolute independence, and scarcely gave any other mark of deference to the crown, than that of inscribing in their acts the year of the reign of Charles the Simple. The feudatories south of the Loire were almost forgotten by the king, and he hardly found occasion to remark that they had ceased to obey him; but the insubordination of the count of Paris, who, in his reign, also assumed the title of duke of France, caused him more uneasiness. The house of the counts of Paris owed its greatness to Charles the Bald, who, as a recompense to Robert the Strong for the assistance he had afforded him, gave him

the government of Paris and of the country situated between the Seine and the Loire. A Capitulary, published towards the end of Charles's reign, had rendered this government, like all the others, hereditary. During the disorders which reigned at the end of the ninth century, the provincial authority of these counts had increased, while that of the king had diminished. At the deposition of Charles the Fat, Eudes, the son of count Robert, had assumed the title of king. During his reign he strengthened and extended the hereditary domain of his family; and when, upon the death of Eudes, the crown of France reverted to the Carlovingian line, in the person of Charles the Simple, the real sovereignty, the substantial power, continued in the hands of Robert duke of France, the brother of Eudes; and of his son, Hugh the Great, count of Paris. Charles, who perceived that they were absolute masters in the kingdom which was called his, abandoned his residence in their fiefs, where he felt himself an inferior and a dependant. The city of Laon was almost the only one the government of which had not been bestowed on some count: thither he removed his court and his seat of government; and his son and grandson, who reigned after him, scarcely ever went beyond the bounds of the Laonnais.

Whatever was the incapacity of Charles the Simple, whatever wrongs of commission or of omission he might have to answer to his immediate vassals, his share in the general government of the kingdom was so small, his authority was so little felt or regarded by the great nobles, that they might safely have allowed him to retain, to the end of his life, a title of which he could make no bad use. But at the same time that they had stripped him of all real power or efficiency, they expressed astonishment that he did not protect his kingdom as vigorously as the most puissant and glorious of his ancestors could have done; they accused him of abuses to which he was a stranger; they reproached him with hostile invasions which they would not furnish him troops to repel. An assembly of nobles, held at Soissons in 920, resolved to depose him; and the lords, using a symbolical custom taken from the newly created feudal system, broke straws and threw them in the air in his presence; thus declaring that they renounced their allegiance to him. The expression, *rompre la paille*, borrowed from this ceremony, and signifying, openly to renounce all friendship with any one, has remained in use to the present day. In spite of this violent proceeding, Charles the Simple continued to reign

for nearly three years longer: the nobles, who were scarcely conscious of his existence, took little trouble to complete his downfall. It was not till he offended duke Robert by an act of private injustice,—the usurpation of an ecclesiastical benefice which he endeavoured to dispose of to the count's prejudice,—that his puissant vassal took arms against him, and caused himself to be crowned at Rheims, at the end of June, 922. Less than a year afterwards—on the 15th of June, 923—Robert was killed in a battle fought against Charles the Simple, between Soissons and St. Médard.

But the malecontent party were not disheartened by the loss of their leader. They offered the crown to duke Rudolf of Burgundy, who actually wore it from 923 to 936, though he scarcely ever quitted his hereditary fief, or took any share in the government of France. He abandoned all that still remained of the royal power to Hugues le Blanc, count of Paris, and son of Robert; while Charles the Simple, betrayed by Heribert count of Vermandois, to whom he had intrusted his personal safety, was arrested at Peronne, and conveyed to Château Thierry, where he was kept prisoner more than five years, till, on the 7th of October, 929, he died.

During this period, which we designate as the reign of Charles the Simple, though he had so small a share in the events by which it was marked; whilst the sovereign authority was in abeyance—residing neither in the king, nor in the national assemblies, which were no longer convoked; whilst France was but a formless collection of independent sovereignties, slightly and imperfectly bound together by a feeble federative system—having neither laws whose authority they equally recognised, nor a uniform system of procedure, nor a common treasury, nor a common army, nor a general currency; one single event of real importance occurred. This was the final settlement of the Northmen in that part of Neustria, which received from them the name of Normandy; an event which changed the most formidable enemies of France into the best and bravest of her citizens.

Among the Norse chiefs, one of the most formidable was Rou, or Rollo, who, in the year 876, had performed his first feats of arms in France with the fierce comrades of his enterprise; and who, from that time alternately falling upon Neustria, Aquitaine, Lorraine, and England, had made himself the terror of the West, the idol of his northern comrades, and at length the supreme

commander of their armies. In 911, quitting the shores of England with a formidable fleet, he ascended the Seine, and laid siege to Paris. This aggression was suspended by a three months' truce, which Charles the Simple obtained from him by the aid of gold. But scarcely had this period elapsed, when Rollo began to lay waste the provinces with unheard-of cruelty, burning churches, massacring priests, and exterminating the whole population, excepting the women, whom he led away captive. The king, who had no troops to oppose to him, sent the archbishop of Rouen, named Franke or Francon, to offer to cede to him a vast province of France, in which he and his warriors might establish themselves; if, at this price, he would abstain from ravaging the rest of the kingdom, and acknowledge the sovereignty of the crown of France. Rollo appeared tempted by these offers; and an armistice was concluded in the year 911, between the French and the Normans, to allow time for settling the terms of the approaching treaty. The first exacted by the bishops who were intrusted with the negotiation was, that Rollo and his soldiers should make a public profession of Christianity. The conversion of an army and a people who had so long distinguished themselves by their furious hostility to the churches and the ministers of the Christian religion, did not present the difficulties that might have been anticipated. For near a century the Normans had been living among the Christians of France or of England, and had lost sight of their own priests and the temples of their fathers' gods. They regarded Christianity as the religion of civilization. Several of their chiefs had successively embraced it, when Louis le Débonnaire and his successors had offered them lands in Friesland and on the Rhine, on that condition. Alfred the Great had found equal pliancy among the Danes, to whom he had granted settlements in East Anglia and Northumberland. This primary condition once agreed upon, Charles showed great facility as to all others. He gave his own daughter Gisèle to Rollo in marriage; and ceded to him and his followers the whole province which still bears their name, from the river Epte, which falls into the Seine below Rocheguyon, to the sea. And as this region had been rendered completely desert by the ravages of the Normans; as all traces of agriculture had disappeared, and forests had covered the deserted fields; Charles compelled Berenger count of Rennes, and Alain count of Dol, to bind themselves to furnish, provisions for the Normans. It appears that, at the same time, he

ceded to these nobles all the claims of the crown over that part of Britany which no longer acknowledged its allegiance to the king of France.

After the conditions of the establishment of the Normans in maritime Neustria were settled, king Charles, accompanied by Robert count of Paris and duke of France, repaired to a place named St. Clair, on the left bank of the Epte; whilst Rollo, surrounded by his soldiers, appeared on the right. Peace was then confirmed by mutual oaths. Rollo swore fidelity to king Charles, who, in return, committed his daughter to his hands, and invested him with the duchy of Normandy. The bishops then told Rollo that he could not receive a gift of such price, without, in return, kissing the king's feet. We find that these servile forms, so alien from the manners of northern barbarians, were invariably ingrafted on feudality by the priests. They had transplanted them from the courts of Eastern despots to their own church, whence they taught them again to the kings of the West. It is difficult to say whether this was the result of mere habit, or whether they took a delight in humbling the secular grandees who disputed with them the highest rank in the state. "Never," replied Rollo, "will I bend my knees before any man; never will I kiss the foot of any mortal being!" As, however, the bishops continued to urge him, he ordered one of his soldiers to kiss the king's foot in his stead. The soldier instead of stooping down to the king's foot, raised it to his own mouth; and that in so ungentle a manner, that he threw the king down backward.* The Normans hailed this affront to royalty with shouts of laughter. The assembled people were thrown into a state of agitation and alarm, as if it were the prelude to another attack. Charles's nobles thought it more prudent to disguise their resentment, and the ceremony continued. The nobles were called in turn, after the king and duke Robert, to swear to guaranty to Rollo and his successors, from generation to generation, the possession of the lands ceded to him. The counts, courtiers, bishops, and abbots, all took the oath; after which the king returned into France, and Rollo, accompanied by duke Robert, set out for Rouen.

Robert duke of France had been the mediator and the pacifi-

* Robert Wace, a poet contemporary with Henry I., and author of the *Romount de Rou* (Rollo,) says nothing of this somewhat rough practical joke being performed by deputy. According to him, it was the Norse hero himself who was guilty of the irreverence.—*Transl.*

had not passed away before the Romanz French was become their mother-tongue. But they infused into this language that life and energy which inspired all they did, and which they had likewise communicated to the military discipline of France. The rustic Roman, the patois which ignorance had formed out of corrupt Latin, became, in the hands of the Normans, a regular written language, well adapted for every purpose of legislation or of poetry. One century only had elapsed when they employed it for a code of laws, or a romance of chivalry.* They were the first of the French nation who did so employ it; and the Romanz poetry received from them its wild and daring character and its aptitude for works of imagination.

Other princes had already tried in Germany, in France, and in England, to reclaim the Northmen from their predatory habits, and allure them to agricultural life, by giving up to them a province where they were permitted to live under their own chiefs and their own laws. But the moment for this conversion had not as yet arrived. In every case they had abandoned their new colonies after a few years, and returned to their wild and adventurous life, which they regarded as at once more glorious and more agreeable. The change which had taken place in two essential points, determined the followers of Rollo to adopt the habits of civilized life with earnestness and perseverance. These were, first, the desolation of the country lying along the shores of the British Channel; and, secondly, the independence of the feudal lords, and the resistance they began to oppose in each province. When the Normans made a descent on a point of the coast, far from being sure of finding booty wherewith to load their barks, they now often found it difficult to collect provisions enough for their subsistence, and were forced to plunge into the depths of forests which had grown up in these depopulated regions, or into tracts of marshes formed by rivers which had been let to overflow their banks; to approach mountains, every defile of which

* The rapid disappearance of the language of the conquerors is one of the most singular facts in history. Wace says that Louis d'Outremer sent to Willeaume Longue-Espée an ambassador named Cosne, who knew how to speak "Thioiz" (Deutsch) and "Normant." William Longsword, though the son and successor of Rollo, was obliged to send his son, duke Richard I., to Bayeux to learn Norse. "Richard," says Wace, recapitulating his accomplishments, could speak "Daneiz et Normant."—*Transl.*

might conceal an ambuscade; and, as local authorities had universally taken the place of a central administration, there was not a province where they did not encounter a chieftain interested in repelling or cutting them off, and bands of peasants whom despair had driven to take up arms, and flock to his standard. The plunder had become both too poor and too dearly purchased; and the Normans had begun to perceive that less toil would suffice to put them in possession of the riches which lay hidden in the soil of Normandy, than to pursue what remained in the hands of the peasants of Burgundy through such formidable obstacles, and such incessant contests.

The same causes operated, more slowly, perhaps, on the two other piratical nations, who at the same time devastated the Western empire: but they did operate; and towards the end of the tenth century their invasions ceased altogether. The Saracens did not content themselves with occasional descents on the coasts; they had established colonies on the Continent, whence they extended their ravages far and wide. The principal of these were in Campania, Puglia, Calabria, and in Provence. The place which was for the longest time the centre of their depredations was their colony of Frainer or Frassineto, near Fréjus. Twenty Spanish Saracens were driven on these shores by a tempest: finding a good landing-place at the foot of Monte Moro, and impervious forests all around, they established themselves there, and invited their countrymen to join them. At first they hired themselves to Provençal nobles, who hated each other, and, without courage to make war in their own persons, were glad to avail themselves of any instruments of mutual aggression. When, however, the Saracens had become more powerful, or more secure in the cowardice of their neighbours, they carried their devastations on the one hand into Provence, on the other into Italy.

It was, doubtless, by taking advantage of the feuds between the neighbouring kings and nobles that the Saracens ventured to cross their frontiers on either hand, to follow the line of the Alps to a considerable distance from the sea, and at last to fix themselves in the country the least fitted by its climate, its defensible character, and the ruggedness of its mountains, for the wandering tribes of Africa. During the first half of the tenth century we find frequent mention of the Saracens, who were masters of the pass of St. Maurice in the Valais. At a later period they

cator of the Normans, and was, therefore, chosen as the sponsor of the new convert. Rollo was presented at the font by the duke, who gave him his name, and was baptized by Francon, archbishop of Rouen, in the cathedral church of that city, (A. D. 912.) During the seven days that he wore the white robe of a catechumen, the bishops who instructed him in the articles of his new faith, induced him every day to grant some fresh portion of land to some church in Normandy. These were his first infeudations. As soon as he had received baptism, he divided the rest of his duchy among the officers of his army. Each of these districts received the appellation of county (*comté*;) and the Norman chief to whom it was granted, in his turn, partitioned it among his soldiers. The feudal system had slowly gained ground in the rest of Europe; the reciprocal duties of lord and vassal had begun to be regulated by custom; the authority of the counts, who represented the king, had ceased to be in opposition with that of the lords of the soil; the functions of the *missi dominici* had fallen into desuetude; the different tenures of land, after causing extreme confusion, also began to fall under some classification. By introducing into Normandy the feudal system full grown and complete; by taking advantage of all the lights which experience, up to that time, had furnished; by giving a similar origin to all property, Rollo had it in his power to secure to the legislation of his country, a regularity which it had nowhere as yet attained to; and this province, the most recently constituted, soon served as a model to all the others.

This nation of warriors now set themselves to the cultivation of the land with the same ardour and energy with which they had heretofore ravaged it. Foreigners from all countries were invited to come and establish themselves in Normandy: rigorous laws were promulgated, and were no less rigorously enforced, for the protection of property; all thieves or robbers were punished with death; and, from a sort of bravado, Rollo hung a pair of bracelets of massive gold from the branches of an oak near the Seine, where they remained three years untouched. The new duke also rebuilt the churches his countrymen had destroyed; he surrounded the cities with walls, he closed the mouths of rivers with barricades, and put himself in a state of defence against new pirates who might be inclined to follow the track he had traced out for them. Sensible, however, that fortifications cannot protect a nation without the bravery of its sol-

diers, he maintained war on his frontiers in order to keep up the military dispositions and habits of his people. He could not, conformably with his treaty, turn his arms against the French; he, therefore, attacked Gurmhaillon, count of Cornwall, who, in the year 907, had succeeded to Alwin the Great in the sovereignty of Britany. He defeated him in several engagements, and forced the Bretons at length to submit to a foreign yoke.

The conversion of duke Rollo, and his settlement, with his Norman followers, in that part of maritime Neustria which bears their name, is unquestionably the most remarkable event which occurs in the history of France during the tenth century,—the event followed by the most important and the most lasting consequences. It put an end to that war of devastation and of pillage which, during a whole century, had depopulated western Germany, Belgium, Gaul, and England. It enabled those countries to return to the cultivation of their deserted fields, to apply themselves once more to the arts of peace, to rebuild their ruined temples, and to restore the shattered defences of their towns. Above all, it remodelled the national character. The mixture of another race, vigorous, enterprising, and intrepid, infused among them that spirit of adventure which always distinguished the Normans, from the shores of their native Baltic to their latest conquests in Sicily or the principality of Edessa, which they won during the crusades.

The mother-tongue of the Normans, Danish, or more properly Norse, was only a dialect of that great Teutonic language spread over the whole of Germania, another dialect of which was spoken by the Franks. This, though in the dominions of Charles the Simple, abandoned by the later for the corrupt Roman, or embryo French, was still understood by the princes, and preserved with a sort of reverence as the language of the victor race. It is, therefore, somewhat extraordinary that the Normans, instead of blending their language with the cognate tongue of the Teutonic Franks, should have adopted the Romanz French. We must, doubtless, attribute this phenomenon to the clergy, whom the conquerors found established in Normandy, and from whom they received their new education. The Normans became very sincere Christians; and, carrying into their religion the same fervour and earnestness which characterized all their actions, they frequented the schools, the catechisms, the sermons of their priests: they laboured to understand what they heard; and two generations

self. He recommended to the suffrages of the Germans his rival, Henry of Saxony, to whom he charged his brother Eberhard to deliver up the regalia of the kingdom. Henry I., surnamed the Fowler, was, consequently, elected soon afterwards, by the diet of Fritzlar. From the year 918 to 936, Germany was governed by a great prince, who delivered her from the ravages of the Hungarians, established order and security at home, and made her formidable abroad.

The repression of the Hungarians was become the most urgent interest, not of Germany only, but of all Europe. But it could hardly be hoped that states which were too ill-organized to watch over their own interests, to provide for their own defence, would unite their efforts for a common object. The emperor Berenger, after sometimes driving back the Hungarians from Italy by arms sometimes purchasing their retreat, in the latter years of his life, had contracted an alliance with them. It appears that, being extremely pressed by Rudolf of Burgundy, he ceded to them the passes of Friuli. A few months after his death, they took advantage of this opening. One of their most formidable armies appeared before Pavia on the 12th of March, 924.

This city, which might then be regarded as the second in the Western empire for population and for wealth, was reduced to ashes; forty-three churches were destroyed, all the inhabitants were put to the sword, and it is affirmed that only two hundred souls survived out of the immense population it had contained. After this horrible carnage, the Hungarians, instead of returning to Pannonia with their spoil, pushed onward, and, having traversed the Alps, spread like a torrent over the plains of Provence. After crossing the Rhone above Arles, they attacked and pillaged Nismes. From thence they marched to Toulouse, which they visited with all the horrors of fire and sword. Here, however, their army was attacked by a dreadful epidemic, and was at length entirely destroyed by Raymond Pons, count of Toulouse.

About the same time other Hungarian armies, traversing the whole extent of Germany, had reached the banks of the Rhine, had swum across that river, and laid waste Lorraine and Neustria, in the same manner as they had formerly ravaged Germany.

Charles the Simple, having at his disposal only fifteen hundred soldiers, who had been procured for him by the archbishop of Rheims, had kept them under the walls of Laon, without daring to

encounter so terrible a foe, and waiting till, gorged with plunder and with blood, they should retire of themselves. In fact, after a few weeks, the Hungarians evacuated Champagne. They, however, revisited it several times.

Henry the Fowler, who had consented, during the civil wars which embarrassed the commencement of his reign, to pay a yearly tribute to the Hungarians, in the year 933 refused any longer to submit to this humiliation. The incensed Hungarians marched into Germany in two formidable armies, one of which encamped on the Saale, at Merseburg, while the other ravaged Thuringia. Henry, having collected around his banner the Saxons and the Bavarians, advanced on the former army, and offered battle. The Hungarians hesitated. They kindled large beacon fires, in the hope of bringing to their assistance their companions, of whom they now felt the need; but they were not within reach of their signals. The army of Thuringia had been attacked by the counts of Thuringia and of Saxony, and cut to pieces. The fugitives who had escaped from the field of battle, wandering about the country, hunted and massacred by the peasants, could not reunite. When this great disaster was made known to the Hungarians at Merseburg they endeavoured to escape, by flight, from the vengeance of Henry the Fowler; but terror soon gave them up, a defenceless prey, to the swords of the Germans. It was not a battle; it was a frightful butchery, in which thirty-six thousand of their warriors, as it is affirmed, perished. This terrible defeat put an almost total end to the invasions which had so long devastated France, Italy, and Germany.

totally disappear, nor can we find any record of the causes or means of their expulsion.

Three streams,—the Normans from the north and west, the Saracens from the south, the Hungarians from the east,—had poured down with desolating fury upon Europe. Those of the latter tribe, who called themselves Magyars, had been driven from the mountains of northern Asia, where the Tanaïs has its source, about the year 868. They had traversed the shores of the Black Sea, crossed the Don, forced the passes of the Kra-pack mountains, and had at length fixed themselves in Pannonia, and the countries which the Huns had formerly occupied. Their only dwellings were a sort of covered wagons, in which they conveyed their wives and children. Mounted on small horses, lightly accoutred with bows and arrows, they were not less formidable in flight than in attack, and surpassed even the North-men in cruelty.

The emperor Arnulf is accused of having opened the gates of the West to them, in the year 894, when he let them loose upon the Moravians, with whom he was at that time at war. Arnulf, who had shown considerable vigour, and had caused the kingdom of Germany to be respected, at a time when all the other western states were nodding to their fall, died on the 8th of December, 899. From the time of his death, Germany entered on a period of calamities similar to those which had long desolated France and Italy. His son, Louis IV., who succeeded him, was only seven years old: he died on the 21st of November, 911, having not yet attained the age of twenty. During this long minority, the revolts of the subject Slavonian tribes, and the incursions of the Hungarians, rendered Germany a scene of ruin and desolation. Without looking behind them, without thinking of securing a retreat, the latter pushed forward across a country where their course was heralded by terror, and tracked by the blood of defenceless peasants, and the smoking ashes of their crops and habitations. The lightness of their equipments, and the rapidity of their movements, enabled them to escape from the heavily mounted Germans; and while they avoided all regular combat, they spread death around them. Bavaria, Swabia, Thuringia, and Franconia, were ravaged by the Hungarians during the whole reign of Louis IV.

The reign of Arnulf had raised the power and dignity of the monarch among the eastern Franks. That of Louis IV., on the

contrary, annihilated the unity of the monarchy. During his long minority the German nobles suddenly arrogated that independence which the lords of France had slowly usurped during the reign of Charles the Bald and his successors; and it was precisely because Germany was more populous, more warlike—because the armies of the king were better disciplined—that the dukes, who, under Arnulf, were only the lieutenants of the king, rendered themselves formidable, under Louis IV., as proprietors of provinces and masters of armies. The eastern Franks or Franconians, the Saxons, the Swabians, the Bavarians, and Lotharingians, divided under as many independent dukes, appeared so many distinct nations, ready to declare war on each other.

With Louis IV. expired the illegitimate branch of the descendants of Charlemagne (November 21, 911,) which had kept possession of the crown of Germany after the extinction of the legitimate branch. Charles the Simple was the sole survivor of the long line of Carlovingian kings; and his faculties were so dull and feeble, that his stupidity had become proverbial. If the long hostilities of the German people against the Slavonians, whom their oppressions had driven to despair; if the attacks of the Hungarians, who had already conquered the whole of the eastern marches, now called Austria, had not forced upon them the necessity of uniting for their own defence, they would, probably, have hesitated to give a new chief to the state. An imbecile chief was out of the question; and, rejecting all idea of submitting to such a monarch as Charles the Simple, the dukes, who pretended to represent the nation, offered the crown, first, to Otho, duke of Saxony. He declined it, on the plea of his advanced age, and recommended to their suffrages Conrad, duke of Franconia, who was unanimously elected.

Conrad, whose valour and policy have been greatly celebrated, reigned seven years, nearly the whole of which were passed in the field, (A. D. 912—918,) at one while to check the invasions of the Hungarians, at another, to quell the insurrections of Swabia and of Bavaria; at another, to make war on Henry, duke of Saxony, who succeeded to his father Otho on the 30th of November, 913; or to recall to their allegiance the Lotharingians, who had invited Charles the Simple, and made overtures towards a reunion with the French monarchy. Conrad I., king of Germany, died on the 23d of December, 918; and, as he had no children, he imitated the generous conduct of Otho towards him—

CHAPTER XXIII.

State of Europe in the Ninth Century.—House of Saxony.—Death of Henry the Fowler.—His Choice of Otho I.—Exclusion of Thankmar.—His Death.—Otho's Person, Character, and Government.—His Victories.—His Influence over Louis IV. of France.—Union of Italy with Germany.—Its Causes and Consequences.—State of Italy.—Count Hugh of Provence.—Berenger II., King of Lombardy.—Destruction of the Royal Power in France and Burgundy.—Disgraceful State of the Pontificate.—Ruin of the Cities of France and Germany, and of Stationary Commerce.—Travelling Merchants.—Handicrafts exercised by Serfs.—Origin of Small Towns.—Decline of Municipal Liberties.—Defective State of History.—Lothaire.—His unsuccessful Wars.—Marriage of Louis V.—His Imbecility.—Conduct of Blanche.—Death of Louis V.—Charles of Lorraine, the last of the Carolingians.—His Imprisonment and Death.—Usurpation of Hugh Capet.—His Character.—Death of Otho the Great.—Otho II.—His Invasion of France.—His War with the Greeks.—His Capture and Escape.—His Death.—Otho III.—Revolt of the Italians.—Crescentius.—His Death.—Revenge of his Wife Stefania.—Death of Otho III.—Extinction of the House of Saxony.—Dissolution of all the Ancient Monarchies—State of Europe.

DURING the former half of the tenth century, the Christian states of Europe were not united under one supreme controlling will, as at the beginning of the ninth; they did not constitute an association,—a republic of princes, the several members of which, though acknowledging no subordination of one to another, are still aware, that there exist between them mutual relations, duties, and rights,—in short, an association like that formed by the same states in the eighteenth century. On the contrary, this assemblage seemed but the result of a fortuitous arrangement of independent bodies, who, though placed in contact, knew nothing of each other; who neither understood, nor sought to understand, each other's interests and sentiments. It is true, the victory gained by Henry the Fowler over the Hungarians at Merseburg was in some sort, an event of common interest, as it put an end to dangers and calamities felt throughout Europe. Germany, Italy, Aquitaine, Lorraine, and Neustria, had suffered from the ravages of the Hungarian armies; and, though no longer connected with each other, found a common subject of rejoicing in their defeat. From that time the house of Saxony rose in importance in the eyes of all Europe; and Henry the Fowler, being succeeded by a son still more illustrious

than himself, Otho I., and a grandson and great-grandson, Otho II. and Otho III., who were esteemed worthy of treading in his footsteps, the whole attention of their contemporaries was fixed upon these successive rulers of Germany. Otho I., after an interregnum of thirty-nine years, was adorned with the imperial crown, and thenceforward placed himself at the head of Christendom.

Henry the Fowler died in 936, after having prevailed on the princes of Germany to acknowledge as his successor Otho I., the eldest of the sons borne him by his second wife; to the prejudice of Thankmar, his eldest son, whose mother he had repudiated, under pretext of a vow she had made. There was no doubt that the crown of Germany was elective; and whatever were the motive which determined Henry to make a choice amongst his children, that choice, once confirmed by the princes of Germany, became legitimate. Still the jealousy and resentment of Thankmar, who saw himself thus excluded from his father's throne, were natural: his revolts against his brother were to be excused; and the beginning of the reign of Otho the Great is stained by his cruelty to Thankmar, who, after the first civil war, was killed in 937, at the foot of the altar at Ehresburg. The conduct of Otho, with respect to his children, was also not without reproach; like his father, he preferred those of his second wife to those of his first, and goaded to rebellion his eldest son Ludolf, who died in Italy, in the year 957.

Thus, Otho the Great, in common with Charlemagne, began his career with domestic crimes, like all his contemporaries, he acted under the influence of the opinions of his age; he felt the same ambition, the same fierce and ungoverned passions as the less illustrious sovereigns whom he succeeded; like them, he sacrificed his duty to his interest, before his own great genius and noble qualities enabled him to raise himself above the vulgar herd of kings. Let us be indulgent to his memory, for his was the inevitable fate of great men born in a barbarous age. Vast reflection and an extensive study of the world are requisite to enable a man to reconstruct a code of morals for his own use; to attain a perception of the right and the just, at a period when they are unknown; and, above all, to destroy a dangerous code of monkish virtues and compensations for crime, which have been inculcated under the most sacred names, and whose only effect has been, to lull the conscience to rest, leaving to the passions their ancient empire. Otho's morality, like his wisdom, improved with age,

because his actions were more and more swayed by the principles his own heart suggested, in preference to the example or the precepts of the pedants who had formed his youth.

Unfortunately, our information concerning the glorious reign of Otho from 936 to 973,—a reign which, more than any other, contributed to the civilization of Germany,—is extremely slight. We know, generally, that, from this period, Saxony, though she had not yet emerged from barbarism, beheld the increase of her towns and cities; that the arts of industry made some progress; that mines of silver and copper were discovered and worked near Gosslar by the inhabitants. But the historians of the time give us few details as to the manner in which Otho governed his vast empire. Perhaps, indeed, there were but few to give; it appears that during his continual journeys, undertaken either for the purpose of leading his troops, or of presiding at the comitia of his several kingdoms, he suffered the nobles in the northern states, and the cities in the southern, to manage their provincial administration in their own way; and that the greater part of the municipal institutions and customs of the empire were established during his reign. Otho had the lofty stature, the intrepid and commanding countenance, the abundance of fair hair, the bright, open, and daring eye, and the ruddy complexion of the north: he wore a long beard: contrary to the usage of his time, he spoke little else but German, though he understood the Roman dialect used in France, and the language of his Slavonic neighbours; it was not till late in life that he learned to read, and that he acquired some knowledge of Latin. The chase, and the exercises of chivalry, were his favourite pleasures: he preserved all the vigour of youth up to the time of his death, which took place when he was sixty-one years of age.

Otho was not, like Charlemagne, the sovereign of a vast empire extending over all Europe, but rather the chief of a confederation of princes, sharing the countries which had formed that empire: his rank was recognised in Germany, Gaul, and Italy, as being equal to Charlemagne's, but his power was by no means the same. The union of those independent states which acknowledged him as their chief, seemed maintained only by the superiority of his talents and character; accordingly, we find that these states were sufficiently well constituted to maintain their own independence after his death. Charlemagne, on the contrary, who had concentrated the power in his own person, could

not have abandoned it without endangering the whole structure of the Western empire.

The victories gained by Otho in the civil wars of Germany served as steps by which he ascended to empire. Each of the dukes who governed the great provinces esteemed himself an equal of the monarch. In a succession of battles, Otho taught them obedience: he then gave Bavaria to his youngest brother, Henry; Lorraine to St. Bruno, another brother; the new bishoprics of Havelberg and Brandenburg to prelates who undertook the civilization of the Slavonian tribes, and the marquissate of Lausitz (Lusatia) to a new feudatory family engaged to defend the eastern frontier. The rest of the duchies of Germany he left in the hands of their ancient hereditary chiefs; not, however, without ascertaining that those chiefs would hereafter be disposed to concur in the defence of their country.

Otho had acquired some renown in his struggle with the dukes of Germany; but popular enthusiasm is excited only in favour of the conquerors of foreign nations: this glory was early the lot of the Saxon monarch. He gained constant advantages over the Slavonian tribes, who occupied the whole eastern frontier of Germany, and carried on an incessant border warfare; he compelled Harold, king of Denmark, to sue for peace; finally, he defeated the Hungarians on the banks of the Leck, and thus put an end to the ravages of that ferocious nation.

Otho was not recognised as sovereign of France; but the weakness displayed by the princes who governed that country caused all eyes to be turned upon him. In the year of his accession to the throne of Germany, (A. D. 936,) Rudolf, king of France, expired; and Louis IV., son of Charles the Simple, then only sixteen years of age, was recalled from England, where he had spent thirteen years in banishment, to receive a crown, which conferred little more than the sovereignty of the city of Laon; whilst his powerful vassal, Hugh, count of Paris, who placed that crown upon his head, reserved for himself all the powers and privileges of royalty. Otho I., as sovereign of Lorraine, and as guardian of Conrad the Peaceful, king of Burgundy and Provence, found, from the beginning of his reign, that it fell to him to exercise a powerful influence over the destinies of Louis IV., surnamed d'Outremer, and of count Hugh, who had each married one of his sisters: that influence he always exercised in a manner honourable to his own character and advantageous to the

neighbouring state. During his whole reign, from 936 to 954, Louis d'Outremer, humiliated by the contrast between the pompous titles with which he was decorated, and the weakness of his resources, seized every occasion of aggrandizing himself, even at the expense of his brothers-in-law; nor was his conduct to Otho the Great always consistent with truth and loyalty. He took part in the civil wars of Germany, and accepted with eagerness every proposal made to him by the enemies of his powerful neighbour. During the beginning of these two reigns, Louis became the nominal chief of the malecontents of Germany, and Otho of those of France. But the latter, far from abusing his own superior power, seemed to use every effort to re-establish peace and order throughout the West. He interposed to reconcile Louis d'Outremer with his subjects, without in the least abandoning or compromising the interests of the nobles of Neustria, who had placed confidence in him; and, in 942, he prevailed on the king and the count of Paris to sign a treaty of peace, which he undertook to guaranty.

But indisputably the most important event of the reign of Otho I. was the union of the crown of Italy with that of Germany; a union which, though the fruit of his virtues, and the consequence of his high reputation, was not the less fatal to the posterity of both nations; a union repugnant to nature, and prolific only in wars and calamities; a union which subjected the most civilized nations to the most barbarous,—the masters of every art and science to their least skilled disciples; a union which was offensive in proportion as the manners, the opinions, the languages of the two nations were contrasted; as the slowness of apprehension, the avarice, the hardness, and the apathy of the Germans, disgusted a people so lively, intelligent, and impassioned as the Italians; while the very sounds of so harsh and barbarous a language, prevailing in every station of command, seemed formed to offend the musical ear of the people condemned to obey.

It has been remarked, that the feelings of resentment arising from war in the minds of neighbouring nations are far less profound than those occasioned by injuries inflicted under the shadow of peace. Necessity is the first of all laws, to which man learns to submit; and victory, conquest, those grand manifestations of human energy, force us to bow to the empire of necessity. In their submission to the Germans, the Italians had

not even this consolation. Otho the Great became their acknowledged sovereign, partly from the imprudence of their leaders, partly from the gratitude of the people. They fought no battles; they underwent no defeat; and, on a sudden, they found their country a dependency of the German crown, before those who proclaimed themselves their masters had been called upon to produce a single title to justify their usurpation; not even that of conquest.

The Italian nation began to awaken from its lethargy in the tenth century; its towns were gradually becoming rich and industrious; virtues and talents were beginning to be unfolded in those numerous governments which enjoyed an almost absolute independence, and which spread new life throughout the provinces. But these governments,—those, at least, of the powerful dukes and marquesses who shared amongst themselves almost the whole country,—were not the work of the nation, and the nation could not be responsible for their faults. It is an accusation brought against these great nobles, that it was their constant aim, during the ninth and tenth centuries, to place two monarchs in opposition to each other, as a means of weakening and cramping both. The marquesses and dukes of Italy appealed to foreign sovereigns, not for the purpose of subjugating their country, but for that of limiting the royal power. It was by them that Otho the Great was twice invited; it was they who believed their liberty and their privileges more secure under a distant monarch; it was they who presented to that great man a crown for which he was not indebted to his sword, and which he transmitted to successors unworthy of him.

The tyranny of Hugh count of Provence, whom these very nobles had made king of Italy, from 926 to 947, drove them to seek foreign aid. By an artful and dexterous policy, an authority at first very limited, had been changed into absolute power; and the sway of Hugh once established, no part of Italy could have attempted any resistance which would not have been immediately suppressed by force. Accordingly, Berenger II., marquis of Ivrea, withdrew into Germany, for the purpose of assembling the enemies of Hugh, and of forming the army by whose assistance he expected to deliver his country. This furnished Otho the Great with the first occasion of taking an indirect part in the revolutions of Italy, by affording protection to the unhappy exiles who begged him to grant them an asylum.

The revolution begun by Berenger II. succeeded; he re-entered Italy at the head of the emigrants; he obliged Hugh to retreat, and was speedily recognised as king. But the example he had given was quickly followed; fresh malecontents, in their turn, had recourse to Otho the Great, and, unhappily, they, also, could plead well grounded subjects of complaint. Otho I. appeared in Italy as the avenger of wrongs, as the champion of justice. In 951, he re-established peace between Berenger II. and his subjects; but, at the same time, he obliged the former to do him homage for his crown. In 960, summoned afresh by the wishes of almost the whole country, he deposed Berenger, took possession of the crown of Lombardy, and, on the 9th of February, 962, surmounted it with the imperial diadem. Both were elective, and he owed his nomination to those in whom the right to elect resided: he made a noble use of his power; but the fatal example of uniting Germany with Italy was given; and his German successors looked upon that as a right, which had originally been but a concession on the part of the people.

The strength of character and the distinguished talents of Otho the Great, formed a rare exception to the customary laws of nature. The possession of such qualities enabled him to make a more extended and beneficent use of the royal power than any of the other sovereigns of this period. The exorbitant growth of the privileges of the great nobles, the assumption, on their part, of all the prerogatives which seem to constitute royalty, had rendered the kingly office useless; it was no longer any thing but a supernumerary wheel, giving additional intricacy to the machine of the state, while it imparted no additional power; a luxury with which, it seems, the people might well have dispensed. In the family even of Otho the Great, the brother of his wife, Conrad the Peaceful, whose guardian the former had been, during a very long reign, (A. D. 937—993,) over Transjurane Burgundy and Provence, remained so completely inactive, that history has hardly preserved any record of him. The other brother-in-law of Otho, his sister's husband, Louis d'Outremer, died many years before him, in 954, and left an infant son, Lothaire, who grew up under the protection of Otho and his brother, St. Bruno, archbishop of Cologne. The count Hugh had survived Louis but two years, and his three sons, the most celebrated of whom was Hugh Capet, were also children. The two widows of Louis and of Hugh, sisters of Otho and St.

Bruno, forgot the rivalry which had subsisted between their husbands, and placed themselves, with their children, under the powerful protection of their brother. The royal authority was thus in abeyance in France and Transjurane Burgundy; it was equally so both in Italy and Germany, after the death of the emperor Otho, and especially during the long minority of his grandson, Otho III.; nor does it appear that society experienced any serious inconvenience. In truth, the royal power was not sufficient to enable its possessors to be either permanent moderators or umpires of the feuds of their great vassals. They dared not constitute themselves defenders of the laws and of public order; on the contrary, they felt themselves compelled to adhere to the more powerful of two rivals; to sanction with their authority the encroachments of the stronger after victory; to alienate what was inalienable; to perpetrate a legal robbery on the lawful heirs in favour of their oppressors; to trample under foot the statutes which regulated the succession of fiefs; to bestow on secular nobles bishoprics and abbacies, which, according to the canons, could be given to none but ecclesiastics; in short, from weakness and fear, to commit, in favour of their most formidable vassals, acts as arbitrary as those of the most absolute despotism.

Kings were not the protectors of the nobility; since they lent their assistance only to those nobles who were already more powerful than themselves, while they refused it to those who really needed support. Kings were not the protectors of the clergy;—not that this powerful order, which, in the preceding century, had possessed the real sovereignty of France, was not sometimes in want of a champion; for the blind piety of kings and nobles had no sooner loaded them with riches and fiefs than their treasures and their lands tempted the avidity of the soldiery; or than some knight, uniting the cross and the sword, bore away, as a secular prelate, all the wealth which some former warrior had bestowed upon the church: but the king either tolerated these irregularities, or himself committed them, and the secularizations which caused the greatest scandal almost always obtained his sanction. Finally, kings were not the protectors of a third estate, which they had suffered to be crushed; which, as a national power, no longer existed. Every tie between them and the people was destroyed, and in the serfs of their vassals they could no longer recognise their own subjects.

This state of society was, without doubt, less destructive than

that by which it had been preceded; but it is far less favourable to the historian. If we pass in review every topic which properly falls within the province of history, we find that there were, at this period, absolutely none which could furnish matter for observation; especially at a time when all communication was difficult; when no conveyance for letters existed; when no journal, no periodical publication gave an account of passing events; and when the only knowledge of what was done, even in a neighbouring state, was conveyed by travelling merchants, or by marching armies. Kings, who had now scarcely any share in the administration of the countries they nominally governed; having no ministry, no standing army; in short, nothing but a household composed of great officers attached to their persons, through whom they carried on the small portion of public affairs that devolved upon them; spent their time chiefly in journeying from castle to castle, or more frequently from convent to convent. We cannot, therefore, wonder, if we find the chronicles of the tenth and eleventh centuries sometimes entirely forgetting them for years together. In many of them, the learned writers only labour to discover if they were still in existence, and what was the place of their abode. No nation any longer possessed the means of carrying on national wars; and, dating from the cessation of the invasions of the Normans and the Hungarians, the whole military history of the age is almost confined to attacks upon castles in a circle of some leagues around each petty prince. Legislation was as completely suspended as war. In the history of France there are at least four centuries, during which legislative power existed nowhere,—from the last capitulary of the year 882, till a considerable time after the institutions of St. Louis in 1269. And even the latter, with which French legislation recommences, are addressed only to the royal fiefs. In the empire, both in Germany and in Italy, the suspension was shorter or not so complete; but the laws promulgated from the assembly at Roncaglia, by the Othos and their successors, were hardly recognised by the states to which they were addressed.

Ecclesiastical history itself seemed suspended; since almost all the more valuable benefices of the church were become the property of some temporal baron, who could not read, and who thought himself guilty of no usurpation, provided that, however deeply infected with the passions and the vices of his age, he had received the ecclesiastical tonsure. The chair of Rome,

even, had not escaped these encroachments of the great feudatory subjects. Too large a portion of grandeur and of wealth had been accumulated around the papal throne, to allow the powerful nobility in the neighbourhood of Rome to regard it without feelings of ambition and envy. Indeed, for some time, it became, as it were, hereditary in the family of the marquesses of Tusculum; its destination was likewise repeatedly determined by two Roman ladies, celebrated for their gallantries—Theodora and Marozia—who successively raised to the sacred chair either their lovers or their children. During the greater part of the tenth century, the heads of the Christian church were young nobles, hardly past the age of boyhood, from whom no one thought of demanding a decision in matters of faith, and over the history of whose debaucheries the annalists of the church have rapidly passed, as too scandalous for their pens.

The active portion of the community—the dukes, the counts, the castellans, or lords of castles—almost completely escaped the notice of history, by their profound ignorance, and their complete indifference to the opinions of contemporaries, or to the judgments of posterity. The historical labours set on foot somewhat later by this same nobility, in their genealogical researches or the blazonry of their armorial bearings, had not yet begun. The pride of birth itself is a step made by society towards an appreciation of the value of the esteem of others, which the men of this age had not yet made; as yet, they attached but slight importance to the knowledge of their origin and descent; it was enough for them to feel that they were powerful. We, accordingly, find that none of the chronicles of these new dynasties were begun in the tenth century; none of the princely families of that period cared for posterity, or imagined that posterity would care for them.

At a later period, history resumed her labours in the towns and cities both of Italy and Spain. Great assemblages of men had not only common interests, but likewise a necessary publicity, which permitted authors to seize at least the general features of municipal history, and awoke the attention of the men of the time to the advantages which they would derive from an acquaintance with the deeds of former ages; but in the remaining part of the West, in France and Germany, the inhabitants of the towns had little to record but their sufferings. Victims of every invasion; pillaged or burned in every war, whether domes-

tic or foreign; the towns were reduced to the most deplorable condition. Their population was no longer composed of men of independent station, of capitalists, of merchants, and of manufacturers; but of a trembling and enslaved populace, who lived from day to day, and who, if they succeeded in saving any thing, took care to conceal it under an appearance of abject poverty.

These towns were no longer either the seat of government or of any subordinate administration. The kingdoms of France, Germany, Lorraine, Transjurane Burgundy, and Italy, were actually without capitals; each province had no longer its metropolis; castles were the residence of kings, prelates, dukes, counts, and viscounts; in them were assembled the courts of law, and in them was justice administered; in them were to be found all who enjoyed any independent fortune, all who affected the least elegance or luxury in their dwellings or their attire. It is true, that certain trades were still obscurely carried on in the towns, but almost exclusively for the use of the neighbourhood: this was particularly the case in those of the south of Gaul, which had more commonly escaped the ravages so destructive to all those of the north; but, in general, commerce, as must always be the case, had followed in the track of those who required what she could supply. It was not in the ancient capitals of Gaul that the splendid assortments of armour, and the rich magazines of stuffs, used by the lords and knights, or by the high-born ladies of the castles, were to be found. The merchant had no choice but to be a traveller; as he still is in the Levant, as he still is in every country where the people are oppressed. He went on his way, accompanied by his carriages, and thus transported his goods from the domains of one count or baron to those of another. He had no fixed place of abode, no known warehouse, no fortune, the amount of which could be calculated, except the small quantity of goods which he carried about with him. Thus he avoided the avidity and the extortions of a prince against whose power he had no means of defence; and the protection of those amongst whom he made his regular visits was only obtained by their being made to feel the need in which they stood of his services.

As to the mechanical arts which required less intelligence, less capital, and which might be exercised indifferently in all places, the powerful took care to have some of their serfs trained to their exercise. Every prelate, every count or viscount, endeavoured to have for his own especial service a set of the same "*good ar-*

tisans” that Charlemagne, a hundred and fifty years before, had commanded his judges to provide for each of his castles or royal abodes; viz. “workmen in iron, gold, and silver; stone-cutters, turners, carpenters, armorers, engravers, washers; brewers skilled in making mead, cider, and perry, and all other liquors fit to be drunk; bakers, who likewise have the art of preparing millet for our use; net-makers, able to make every thing appertaining to the chase; and all other tradesmen, whom it would be too long to enumerate.” From the time of Charlemagne these artisans were but miserable serfs, who worked on the monarch’s account with the materials furnished them by his judges. At a later period, they were equally serfs, but they belonged to the nobles or to the prelates, who had need of their services; and their number was reduced in the proportion which the power or the wealth of a count bore to that of an emperor of the West. Hence it was that the foundation of a convent or of a castle was always followed by the erection of a wretched village, where, under the shadow of the great house, the men whose labour was necessary to the master congregated.

In the course of the tenth century, these villages, grown with time into small towns, multiplied as the feudatory families also increased; for every house diverged into a great number of branches, and new counts and viscounts inhabited places before unoccupied. But the progress of these villages contributed to hasten the ruin of the large towns; just as the slavery of the artificers had caused the decline of all mechanical arts. The citizens of Paris, Rouen, Amiens, Tours, who, under the first dynasty, had found a certain livelihood in their handicrafts or their commerce; and who, by their labour and economy, could then repair the losses of war and the harassing exactions of the Frank kings, under the second family, could no longer find employment or purchasers. When the Normans, the Saracens, or the Hungarians had burned any great town, a few unhappy beings assembled afresh amongst the ruins; but they brought with them no means of regaining their former opulence, of restoring their families, or of repairing the losses which the mass of the population had suffered. The impoverishment of the towns, and the diminution in the number of their inhabitants at this period, had been followed by the loss of all their privileges. In the tenth century, the *curiæ*, or the senates of the cities, and the assemblies of the burgesses, which the first Franks had respected, had totally disappeared. Nor did

the inhabitants lay claim to any privileges, liberties, or immunities; nor did any insurrectionary movement, any tumult, indicate their discontent at being deprived of them. Indeed, such rights had been silently renounced at the time when the cities had ceased to contain any men of independent fortune or of education, in the enjoyment of leisure, and possessed of the requisite courage and talents to maintain them.

The state of the different classes of the population in the tenth century, explains both the silence and the confusion of the historians of that period; but without an actual perusal of these ancient documents, it is impossible to conceive to how few lines all that has been preserved to us from that age reduces itself, and how much suspicion attaches even to those few. It would be difficult to imagine all the errors and anachronisms into which Ademar de Chabannes, or the monk Odorannus, have fallen, though both of them rank amongst the number of the best chroniclers of France belonging to that epoch; or the profound ignorance of the affairs of France displayed by Wittikind, in other respects an intelligent historian, and well informed whenever he speaks of Otho I. In the midst of this profound obscurity, we will endeavour to point out in a summary manner the two important events which marked the second half of the tenth century;—in France, the extinction of the second branch of the Carolingian dynasty; and in Germany and Italy, that of the house of Saxony.

Louis d'Outremer expired on the 10th of September, 954, in consequence of a fall from his horse, which had taken fright at the appearance of a wolf on the banks of the Aisne. He left two children: Lothaire, between thirteen and fourteen years old; and Charles, an infant, who, many years afterwards, was duke of Lower Lorraine. Hugh count of Paris, rival and brother-in-law of Louis IV., died two years after him, on the 16th of June, 956, and left three sons, the eldest of whom, Otho, died in 963; the second, Hugh Capet, was six years younger than the king Lothaire; the third was destined to holy orders. Lothaire and Hugh Capet, sons of two sisters, and both protected by Otho the Great and his brother, were brought up by their mothers in great harmony. After they had both arrived to man's estate, it does not appear that this good understanding was troubled, or that the rivalry existing between their fathers was renewed between themselves. On the contrary, it is remarkable that Hugh Capet, destined at a later period to play the part of a usurper, during the

long reign of his cousin, (A. D. 954—986,) afforded no remarkable evidence either of ambition or of talents. He passed his life peaceably, in the enjoyment of the wealth and the vast fiefs which rendered him far superior in power to his cousin, of whom he was only the first vassal; and when he was afterwards placed on the throne, he was indebted neither to his merit, his reputation, nor his activity, but to the extreme disproportion between the extent of his possessions and those of the royal family.

The life of Lothaire appears to have been more active; he felt humbled by the contrast between his weakness or his poverty, and the titles with which he was decorated; he set himself to work to recover either power or influence; but to the want of loyalty shown by his father, he added a want of judgment, which made him fail in all his undertakings. On the death of his uncle Otho the Great, on the 7th of May 973, forgetful of the gratitude he owed him, he thought he might profit by the youth of his cousin Otho II., who was but eighteen years old, and, by the troubles in the family, to strip him of his possessions. He attacked him without making any declaration of war, and defeat and shame were all that he gained. By this aggression he provoked the Germans to enter France and to advance as far as the walls of Paris; while, even in his own army, he had continual proofs of the contempt in which the French held both his courage and his capacity. He made peace with Otho II.; but at the death of the latter, in 983, he again tried to take advantage of the childhood of Otho III., to rob him of some of his provinces. His success was the same as before.

In 985, Lothaire went to Limoges, and spent some months in Aquitaine, to be present at the marriage of his son Louis V., then eighteen years of age, and associated in the sovereignty for the last six years, to a daughter of a count of that country whose name is not known. The race of the Carolingians was smitten with the same hereditary imbecility which for so long a period had been the lot of the Merovingians. Lothaire, of whom we know very little, seems to have been an object of universal contempt. His wife Emma not only partook of this sentiment, but is accused of having increased it by her gallantries. “Blanche, the wife of his son,” says Rudolf Gläber, a contemporary author, “seeing that the son had still less talent than his father, and being herself a lady of a rare wit, resolved to seek a divorce. She artfully proposed to him to return with her into her own province,

to cause her hereditary rights to be acknowledged. Louis, who did not suspect her design, made his preparations for the journey; but as soon as they had passed the frontier of Aquitaine, Blanche abandoned him, and rejoined her countrymen. When Lothaire was informed of this, he set out after his son, and having joined him, brought him home."

This fragment, incomplete as it is, is well nigh the most precise information we have of the reigns of Lothaire and his son. The former died on the 2d of March, 986, and was interred at Rheims: a vague report prevailed that he had been poisoned by his wife. The following year, his son Louis V., who was surnamed *le Fainéant*, having expired on the 21st of May, 987, his wife, who had returned to him, was also accused of poisoning him. But both of these queens must have seen, that, far from reaping any advantage from such a crime, they had nothing to expect but what in reality followed—the total ruin of the Carlovingian dynasty. The race was not, however, extinct. Lothaire had a brother, Charles duke of Lorraine, who had children. Charles, it is true, had displayed a petulance without capacity, an activity without perseverance, which had rendered him no less contemptible than his more indolent predecessors. Still he was acknowledged at Laon, the only town remaining in the hereditary domain of the sovereign; and he entered into negotiation with the bishops to secure his coronation. But Hugh Capet, then forty-two years of age, who had not heretofore distinguished himself by any great quality or any striking action, assembled his own vassals,—the counts and barons who held of the earldom of Paris, the duchy of Neustria, and the duchy of France. Their little army saluted him with the title of king at Noyon; and Adalberon, archbishop of Rheims, anointed and crowned him, July 3d, 987, in the cathedral at Rheims. After this pretended election, in which the rest of France took no part whatever, and which several provinces refused to recognise for three or four generations, Hugh Capet besieged Laon, and was repulsed by Charles. Corruption was more successful than arms. The last of the Carlovingians was surprised in his bed by traitors, and thrown into the prison of Orleans, where he died, after many years of captivity.

The degradation and fall of an ancient line, the perfidy of the new sovereign, the disloyalty of those who brought about the revolution, have made this period far from an agreeable subject to French historians: they hurry through it with extreme rapidity,

and no part of the history of the monarchy is, perhaps, enveloped in greater obscurity. The later events of the house of Saxony, about the same time, are better known, and related in greater detail.

Otho I., who died on the 7th of May, 973, had, during the latter years of his life, reformed the administration of Italy; he had restored to the pontifical chair its dignity, by causing pope John XII., who dishonoured the tiara by his youth and his vices, to be solemnly deposed by a council; and had put an end to the scandalous proceedings of the counts of Tusculum and their mistresses, who disposed of the pontificate. Otho, who had experienced the inconstancy and faithlessness of the great feudatories of the crown, had strenuously endeavoured to increase the importance of the cities. Those of Italy, which already surpassed any of the West in number and opulence, obtained from him permission to surround themselves with strong walls; to nominate their own magistrates, who were to perform at the same time the functions of judges, of captains of their militia, and of administrators; in short, to limit the power of the counts sufficiently to protect themselves from arbitrary measures. The people of Italy cherished towards Otho and his family, gratitude proportioned to such vast benefits; and his son, who had been associated with him in the imperial government from the year 967, though only eighteen years old at the death of his father, was recognised without difficulty by the Italians, as their sovereign.

Otho II., surnamed the Red, from the colour of his hair, had not the talents, still less the virtues, of his father. The vices of his youth determined his mother Adelheid, afterwards venerated as a saint, to retire from the court. His ambition led him to undertake several unjust wars; while his imprudence sometimes brought down defeat upon his arms. He had, however, that activity of mind, that promptitude of decision, that energy, which subjects are so ready to regard as proofs of a great character in their king; and his reign of ten years' duration, from 973 to 983, was not without glory. Unjustly and traitorously attacked by his cousin Lothaire, he entered France to avenge himself at the head of a numerous army; and, as he had predicted, he reached the heights of Montmartre, where he made his soldiers sing hal-lélujah loud enough to be heard in the church of Ste. Gèneviève. In Germany, he gained several advantages over his cousin, Henry, duke of Bavaria, who was indebted to his unjust aggressions

for his nowise honourable surname of le Quérelleur. In Italy, Otho II. had many contests with the Greeks, whom he aimed at depriving of the possession of the provinces of Puglia and Calabria. He had wedded a Greek princess, Theophania, sister of the two emperors Constantine and Basil, whose reign was at once the longest (A. D. 963—1028) and the most obscure in the whole history of Byzantium. Whilst his two brothers-in-law were engaged in a war against the Bulgarians, which terminated in the conquest of their whole territory, Otho II., who had entered Italy with a numerous German army, in 980, and had strengthened himself by the alliance of the duke of Benevento, advanced into those provinces which now form the kingdom of Naples; an enterprise which the duke of Benevento had greatly facilitated by the cession of all the mountain passes. Capitanata, on the Adriatic, Calabria, and a part of Basilicata alone resisted his whole force. The Greek emperors, it is true, being unable to send troops into Italy, had called in the aid of the Saracens, who joined their arms to those of the Greeks for the defence of southern Italy.

After a struggle of two years, the fate of the war was decided by a great battle fought near the sea-coast before the little town of Basentello, in Lower Calabria. There Otho II. met the combined army of the Saracens and the Greeks, who were awaiting him. The first attack of the Germans threw the Eastern troops into disorder; but, at the moment that the conquerors, in the ardour of pursuit, broke their ranks, the reserve of the Saracens fell upon them, and a fearful massacre ensued.

After the loss of his army, Otho II. fled along the coast, on which the village of Basentello is built. Hard pressed by the Saracens, who were in pursuit of him, a Greek galley, which he saw at anchor at some distance, afforded to him in his distress a refuge from fiercer and more implacable enemies. He made himself known to the commander of the galley, and surrendered himself his prisoner. He quickly perceived that the Greek, dazzled by such an unexpected prize, would be willing to sacrifice the advantage of his country to his own interest. Otho promised him vast heaps of gold if he would conduct him to Rossano, where his mother Adelheid then was. The galley set sail for that town. A secret negotiation was entered into by the captain, Otho, and the empress. Whilst several mules, heavily laden, were making their way to the sea-shore, some of the em-

peror's guards approached the galley in a boat, to ascertain whether it were really their sovereign, who was shown to them on the deck, clothed in purple. The Greeks, accustomed to the habits of their own emperors, who could not take a step without the aid of their eunuchs, and intent on their bargain, were keeping but a careless watch over their prisoner, when Otho threw himself into the sea, swam to the boat which contained his guards, ordered them to row to shore, and putting his own hand to the oar, reached the port, where the captain of the galley could neither retake his prisoner nor touch the promised ransom. Having escaped from his enemies, he immediately retired into Upper Italy.

All the crowns worn by Otho II. were elective; but no sooner had the empress Theophania borne him a son, than he took measures to secure the succession to him. He caused him to be elected king of Germany, by a diet of his states which he called together at Verona. This precaution was justified by the event. Otho II. died at Rome, a few months afterwards (December 983.) The infant Otho III., whom he left under the guardianship of his mother and his grandmother, was, for a long time, the sport of the German factions, which were instigated by his cousins, Henry le Quérelleur, and Lothaire, king of France. The affection borne by the Germans to the memory of his father and his grandfather, kept him, however, in possession of the crown. When, in 995, at the age of fifteen, the young Otho III. entered Italy with a German army, to receive the united crowns of the empire and of Lombardy; when, with the help of this same army, he brought about the elevation of his relative, Bruno of Saxony, (who took the name of Gregory V.) to the papal chair; the Italians perceived with amazement that the Germans, by whom they had never been conquered, treated them as a conquered nation; that they no longer paid any regard to their rights and privileges; that they forcibly appropriated to themselves the tiara of Rome, the imperial crown, and the royalty of Lombardy, to each of which election alone could confer a right. A man, whose heart burned with the remembrance of the ancient glory of Rome, Crescentius, took the title of consul, and placed himself at the head of the cause of Roman liberty, of Italian independence. His great character is but dimly seen amid the thick darkness of the tenth century; the historians of the empire and the church have endeavoured to blacken his reputation; but the grateful people have given the names of the Tower of Crescentius, of the Palace of

Crescentius, to the Mole of Adrian, and to a palace on the Tiber, —to objects, in short, which reminded them of a glorious struggle, an obstinate though vain resistance. Crescentius was, at last, reduced to capitulate, and to throw open the Mole of Adrian to the youthful Otho III.; and the latter, with the perfidy of which the oppressors of the Italians (whom they accuse of want of faith) have given many an example, put to death the champion of Italy, contrary to the capitulation to which he had sworn. But Crescentius left a beloved wife, the beautiful Stefania, who, to avenge her husband, threw aside every other sentiment proper to her sex. She learned that Otho III. had fallen ill on his return from a pilgrimage to Monte Gargano; she contrived that her profound skill in medicine should come to his ear. In obedience to his summons she attended on him, dressed in long mourning garments, but still captivating by her beauty; she obtained his confidence, perhaps at the highest of all prices, and made use of it to administer a poison which was soon followed by a painful death. The last of the Othos of Saxony came to Paterno, on the frontiers of the Abruzzi, to breathe his last, on the 19th of January, 1002.

Thus expired the house of Saxony, which, fifty years before, had become illustrious from the splendid qualities of its founder. The Carolingian line had lately gone out in weakness, imbecility, and shame. The family of Basil the Macedonian was on the point of terminating with the prince who then reigned; and, before that event, the great kingdom of the Bulgarians had ceased to exist. Kader, the forty-fourth of the khaliphs, successors of Mahommed, could no longer command obedience without the walls of Bagdad. Spain was divided amongst the Moorish kings of Corduba, and the petty Christian princes of Leon, Navarre, Castile, Sobrarba, and Arragon. England was invaded and half conquered by the Danes. Great monarchies were every where broken down; great nations no longer recognised a chief, or a common bond of union; society, dissolved by a series of revolutions, exhibited no tendency to reunite into a single whole. Of that great Roman empire, to that colossus which had overshadowed the whole earth,—after repeated convulsions, after sufferings and calamities without example, prolonged through eight centuries,—there remained only the dust. But the work of destruction was accomplished; and even from that dust were to be hereafter moulded the new social structures which divide Europe at the present day.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Demand for Unity and Arrangement by the human Mind.—Difficulty of supplying this Demand in History.—Peculiar Difficulties attached to the Portion treated of in these Volumes.—Cursory Review of Topics.—Reasons for stopping at the Year 1000.—General Belief, at that Period, of the approaching End of the World.—Three distinct Characters of European Nations.—1. Unprofitable Erudition and mental Feebleness of the Greeks.—Works of Photius, Leo the Philosopher, and Constantine Porphyrogenitus.—2. Mental Activity and Love of Liberty of the Italians.—Venice.—Pisa.—Genoa.—Character of their Sailors and Merchants.—Republican Institutions of the Lombard Cities.—Revival of Letters nearly coincident with that of Liberty.—3. Spirit of Chivalry of the Franks.—This Spirit the exclusive Distinction of the Nobles.—Necessity for Self-Defence caused by the weakness of the Government.—Castles.—Body Armour.—Moral Effects of Feudalism.—Complete Degradation of the human Species during the previous eight Centuries.—Absolute Predominance of the Principle of Selfishness—that Principle incompatible with any Virtue or any Glory.

THE human mind appears to be incapable of forming a clear conception or picture of facts which bear no relation to each other; of unconnected narratives; of results independent of a common cause. When a variety of objects are placed before the mind, it labours to classify them—to reduce them to a system; nor till this is accomplished does it readily grasp, or firmly retain them. We find this principle—this fundamental necessity for unity and symmetry in all the productions of the mind, displayed in the fine arts; this demand for system, in the arrangement of the sciences. This unity, pervading all the separate portions of a subject, exists, generally, less in things themselves than in our own faculties; nor, till we have mastered it, are our understandings in a state to take in new knowledge. The very word, indeed, to *conceive*—to take together—implies this operation of the mind.

But, of all branches of human knowledge, that which appears the most difficult to subject to unity of design, is history. We constantly find events implicated which are, in fact, wholly independent of each other: causes become confounded with effects, and effects in turn take the place of causes; thousands of interests, foreign to each other, intermingle, without either uniting, or neutralizing each other. The history of one man, or the his-

tory of one people, would, however, present a system, an organic whole, to the mind;—a central point, around which we might arrange all subsidiary objects. But, when we seek to discover truth in a concatenation of facts, we must give up this central point; for, as no nation, or hardly any, has an isolated existence, the history of any single one cannot be detached from that of the rest: age is enlinked with age—generation with generation; causes are connected together; nations act and react upon each other. The nation, the individual, or the epoch which we detach from all surrounding circumstances, to set it, as it were, in a separate frame and concentrate attention upon it, will appear to greater advantage, as far as the art of the historian is concerned, but will be treated with a less conscientious regard to truth. If it be our object to become thoroughly acquainted with facts, to draw from history every lesson she can afford, we must take her such as she really is;—a varied tissue, whose threads, of which we can discover neither the beginning nor the end, reach from points the most remote, the most independent of each other.

If such be the defect of history in general, more particularly is it that of the period upon which we have endeavoured, in this work, to fix the notice of the public. We have passed in review the first thousand years of Christianity, and have especially devoted our attention to the eight centuries which elapsed from the time that the Antonines united almost the whole of the known earth under a government apparently affording security for order and tranquillity, to the epoch when every successive effort of man to reconstruct a great monarchy failed; and when, at the end of the tenth century, society seemed in a state of general dissolution. We have thought this period worthy of peculiar attention, because its influence has been permanent; because it contains the germe of the opinions, the feelings, the institutions, the actions which we see in operation under our own eyes; because it has been fertile in experiments, both on forms of government and on the varieties of moral education to which mankind can be subjected. Nevertheless, this period, which we have just examined, is so entirely wanting in unity, that it is nearly impossible to designate it by one common name.

When I invited my readers to accompany me in my pilgrimage through these desolate and barren tracts, I dared not indicate with precision the goal towards which we were to tend, or the limits of the region we were about to explore; I dared not tell

them that the horizon was bounded on every side by thick darkness, and that our way would be marked by little but the streams of blood or of mire which we were likely to meet: I dared not forewarn them that they were not to expect, as a recompense for their labour, to behold the display of great and noble character, of sublime efforts of public virtue, or of those living sketches of manners which it is reserved for the historians of the golden ages of literature to trace; aided as they are by the graphic imagination of the poets from whom they take their subjects, and by the accurate reason of the philosophers who examined and discussed passing events. On the contrary, I have had to offer to their consideration only degenerate or barbarous nations; while the outline itself had to be borrowed from historians as degraded or as barbarous. To trace the route we were about to pursue, would perhaps have had the effect of completely discouraging them: if, however, they have had the patience to follow my steps, I venture to congratulate them on having traversed this repulsive region. It was a road necessary to be gone over;—the inevitable path from ancient to modern forms of society, from the heroism of the Greeks or Romans to the chivalry of the crusaders. We should be unable to understand either our forefathers or ourselves, were we to omit this period in our study of history. Heirs of a form of civilization completely different from our own; heirs of the most heterogeneous social elements, of the most opposite recollections and feelings, it is imperative upon us to go back to the origin of things, and to behold whence we have sprung, that we may understand what we are.

But though I did not venture to trace out the plan of such a complicated and unattractive narrative beforehand, it may not be inexpedient, at its termination, briefly to recall its principal features. The decline of Rome, after the loss of her liberty, has been first submitted to our observation. We have seen what had been the effects of three centuries of despotism upon population, upon wealth, upon the public mind, upon morals, and upon the physical force of the empire. We have seen what were the convulsions it had passed through before it was reduced so low, and who were the enemies that, on all hands, threatened this colossus, so formidable even in its weakness. We have seen that it underwent a new organization at the beginning of the fourth century, previous to its engaging in fresh struggles; soon after which, the Goths invaded the East, the Germanic nations the West, and

the Tartars, led on by Attila, succeeded in finally crushing the power of Europe. After many dreadful convulsions, the empire of Rome fell, in 478; while a new Rome arose on the Bosphorus, and for almost a thousand years longer feebly kept alive the Roman name in a people alien from Rome, both in language, manners, and sentiments.

After the fall of the empire of the West, we have not entirely neglected that of Byzantium; but our attention to its revolutions has diminished in proportion as their importance has declined. We have endeavoured carefully to examine the only brilliant period of the lower empire,—that of the legislation and conquests of Justinian; but his immediate successors, as well as the three dynasties of Heraclius, Leo the Isaurian, and Basil the Macedonian, have not appeared to us to merit much attention: as they plunged deeper and deeper into the night of the middle ages, they became more and more estranged from us.

The states which rose upon the ruins of the Western empire, on the contrary, appeared to us to acquire increased importance in proportion as they came nearer to our own times. The power of the Goths and the Franks seemed at first nearly balanced: through more than two centuries we have carefully traced the progress of the decline of the former, and of the aggrandizement of the latter. We have seen it, at the height of its greatness, stained by countless crimes, and apparently tottering on the brink of inevitable destruction, at the very time when a new nation, which threatened the Christian world with universal subjection, issued forth from the deserts of Arabia. We have endeavoured to afford some insight into the character of this people; to explain the powerful springs of action, which, during the lapse of a century, gave them the advantage over all other nations; and have then sought to show how it was that those springs grew lax and powerless, and the Musulman so rapidly lost his formidable attributes.

The struggles of the Arabs with the Europeans brought us back to the Franks. We have beheld new vigour imparted to their monarchy by the conquest of the Austrasians, and the accession of the Carlovingians to the throne. We have followed Charlemagne in his victorious career; we have seen him conquer, and begin to civilize, Northern Europe; but we have also marked how quickly a mortal feebleness and decay followed upon his brilliant efforts; and we have sought to explain why the new empire of the

West fell even more rapidly and ignominiously than that of Rome. It is in the very midst of these two centuries of decline, that we have endeavoured to show how the dissolution of all the bonds of society had prepared the birth of new states; how the obligation imposed on each individual, to defend himself, had restored the respect due to personal courage, and, by consequence, to other virtues which need its alliance and support; how, in short, from the depths of disorder and degradation arose the principles of a new spirit of patriotism—a new nobility of character. After the year 1000, the ground is cleared; it but waits for the erection of the new edifice: it is, however, at the period previous to that in which its foundations were laid, that we have resolved to conclude our task.

Unquestionably there must always be something arbitrary in the choice of these resting-places in the long chain of time;—these knots, intended to separate, and which, on the contrary, often bind together, different periods. The more extensive the general plan that has been followed, the more complicated the interests that have been examined, the more impossible it becomes that there should be one common catastrophe; that threads so various should be cut short by one common termination. There exists, however, at the end of the tenth century, a cause which would arrest our course, even had we intended to pursue our narrative beyond it: this is, the almost universal expectation then entertained, of the approaching end of the world. So strong was this belief, that it led the greater part of the contemporary writers to lay down the pen: for awhile silence was complete; for historians cared not to write for a posterity whose existence was so doubtful. Pious persons who had endeavoured to understand the Apocalypse and to determine the time of the accomplishment of its prophecies, had been particularly struck with the twentieth chapter; where it is announced that, after the lapse of a thousand years, Satan would be let loose to deceive the nations; but that, after a little season, God would cause a fire to come down from heaven and devour him. The accomplishment of all the awful prophecies contained in this book, appeared, therefore, to be at hand; and the end of the world was supposed to be indicated by the devouring fire, and by the first resurrection of the dead. The nearer the thousandth year from the birth of Christ approached, the more did panic terror take possession of every mind. The archives of all countries contain

a great number of charters of the tenth century, beginning with these words: "*Appropinquante fine mundi*," (As the end of the world is approaching.) This almost universal belief redoubled the fervour of religion, opened the least liberal hands, and suggested various acts of piety, by far the greater number of which were donations to the clergy, of possessions which the testator alienated without regret from his family, to whom the universal destruction would render them useless. Others, however, were of a more meritorious nature: many enemies were reconciled; many powerful men granted full pardon to those who had been unhappy enough to offend them; several even gave liberty to their slaves, or meliorated the condition of their poor and hitherto slighted dependants.

We are struck with a sort of affright at the idea of the state of disorganization into which the belief of the imminent approach of the end of the world must have thrown society. All the ordinary motives of action were suspended, or superseded by contrary ones; every passion of the mind was hushed, and the present was lost in the appalling future. The entire mass of the Christian nations seemed to feel that they stood in the situation of a condemned criminal, who has received his sentence, and counts the hours which still separate him from eternity. Every exertion of mind or body was become objectless, save the labours of the faithful to secure their salvation: any provision for an earthly futurity must have appeared absurd; any monument erected for an age which was never to arrive, would have been a contradiction; any historical records written for a generation never to arise, would have betrayed a want of faith. It is almost matter of surprise, that a belief so general as this appears to have been, did not bring about its own dreadful fulfilment;—that it did not transform the West into one vast convent, and, by causing a total cessation from labour, deliver up the human race to universal and hopeless famine. But, doubtless, the force of habit was still stronger, with many, than the disease of the imagination; besides, some uncertainty as to chronology had caused hesitation between two or three different periods; and though many charters attest "*certain and evident signs*," which left no room for doubt of the rapid approach of the end of the world, yet the constant order of the seasons, the regularity of the laws of nature, the beneficence of Providence, which continued to cover the earth with its wonted fruits, raised questions even in

the most timid minds. At last, the extreme period fixed by the prophecies was passed; the end of the world had not arrived; the terror was gradually, but entirely, dissipated; and it was universally acknowledged, that, on this subject, the language of the sacred Scriptures had been misinterpreted.

It shall also be on the threshold of the long-dreaded thousandth year that we will take our stand, to bid a last farewell to the first ten centuries of Christianity, and to pass judgment upon the general character of those nations which, after the fall of the ancient world, were about to lay the foundations of a new one. In the course of the eight centuries which we have made our peculiar study, we have, probably, been struck with the monotony of crime; but the nations of whom we are about to take leave, henceforward assume a more varied character. They were already stamped with at least three perfectly distinct impressions,—the Greek spirit of erudition; the Italian spirit of liberty; the Frank spirit of chivalry. We will endeavour to give a slight idea of what was to be expected from this state of things, and shall conclude with a few words on the morality of the ages which have passed in review before us.

In the tenth century, the Greeks were sole possessors of the inheritance of the learning and science of past ages; indeed, some of their works at this period prove the extent of their erudition. That of the patriarch Photius, which appears to have been composed at Bagdad, at a distance from his library, and with the sole aid of a prodigious memory, contains an analysis and critical remarks on two hundred and eighty books: those of Leo the philosopher, and his son Constantine Porphyrogenitus, pass in review almost every branch of human knowledge, from the administration of the empire, military and naval tactics, the ceremonies of the court,—in short, the appropriate science of kings, down to the most humble occupations of trade and agriculture. Few books seem better constructed to show the vanity of erudition, and to place in strong contrast a vast extent of knowledge, with a total incapacity of deriving any useful results from it.

The fact that this constant degeneracy of the Greeks, this annihilation of genius, and of all the nobler faculties of the mind, took place whilst they were still in possession of the accumulated treasures of the knowledge and enlightenment of the world, is not one of the least melancholy phenomena in the history of the human race.

We believe, or, at least, we assert, that civilization cannot retrograde; that no step made by the mind of man can be lost, and that the conquests of reason and intelligence are secured from the power of time by the invention of printing. But it was not books that were wanting when the human race began its backward course: perhaps it was the wish to read, which books alone do not give; perhaps the power of thinking; perhaps the energy necessary to render thought fruitful and profitable.

In our own days, we have beheld countries in which the press has been made so entirely the instrument of arbitrary power, that the reader turns with disgust from food which he knows or thinks is imbued with poison: we have seen others, where perverted notions of religion inspire such a dread of all exercise of the reason, that the believer, surrounded by works which might possibly excite his doubts, trembles before the confessor who warns him against this forbidden fruit, and abstains from touching it as from some abominable crime—a crime, too, which holds out but few and feeble temptations. In vain has printing multiplied books which disclose the horrors of the inquisition, or the absurd barbarity of torture: it were easy to suggest some great nations, and some smaller communities, which are, or have been, surrounded by these books, and yet have not even been aware of their existence. The books of the ancients, preserved in manuscript, eluded, far better than our own, the hand of power: they excited less alarm, and were not, therefore, the object of an ever-vigilant censorship; nor had governments yet learned to use the talents of writers as weapons to be turned against society; the clergy had as yet laid no interdict upon reading; yet books were not the less without influence upon the morals and actions of men.

The richest stores of books existed at Constantinople, and were accessible to all, in numerous libraries, both public and private. The labour of the copyist is, it is true, infinitely slower than that of the printer; but this labour had been pursued without interruption by a very numerous class of men, and on materials more durable than those now in use, ever since the brilliant times of Greek literature; that is to say, for fourteen centuries, dating back from the year 1000. Constantinople had never been taken by a military force; so that all the stores of antiquity were preserved; while the city had been still farther enriched with those which wealthy land-owners, heads of convents, cathedrals

and schools, had brought from the provinces invaded by enemies; and the high price of books had enhanced the care for their preservation. Knowledge, too, was still honoured; and the knowledge of the time consisted entirely in scholarship. Commentators and scholiasts continued to flourish in regular succession; their writings are sufficient proofs of the prodigious extent of their reading. All that the sublimest meditations of philosophy, the noblest inspirations of liberty, had suggested to the founders of Grecian glory; all the lessons afforded by the histories of Athens and of Rome, were within their reach. The citizens of Constantinople might read in their own language the effusion of republican sentiments, poured forth from the breasts of men inspired and elevated by the enjoyment of all the rights of a free country; their own manners, their own customs, their national recollections, were of farther use to them in explaining what is occasionally obscure to us; but the heart to understand was wanting. The erudite furnished, with the minutest accuracy, all the details of the mythology, the geography, the manners, the customs, of the ancients; they were thorough masters of the language of their great progenitors, of the figures of their rhetoric, of the whole mechanism of their versification, the ornaments of their poetry;—the spirit alone escaped them, and the spirit always escaped them. They knew how many thousands of citizens had lived, happy and illustrious, in each state of that very Greece where they now beheld a few hundreds of slaves; they could point out the exact spot where the brave companions of Miltiades and Themistocles had repulsed the countless forces of the great king; they knew each of the laws on which depended that balance of power by which the dignity of man was upheld, in those admirable constitutions of antiquity: yet neither the misery of their country, nor the destructive invasions of their neighbours, nor the shameful tyranny of the eunuchs of the court, had once inspired them with the idea of searching for practical lessons in that antiquity, the historical details of which they knew by heart. Study, with them, had no other aim than to enrich the memory; their powers of thought lay dormant, or, if they were ever awakened, it was only to plunge into interminable discussions on theology; utility appeared to them almost a profanation of science:—a memorable example, and by no means a solitary one, of the uselessness of the intellectual inheritance of past ages, if the generation on whom it descends want the

vigour necessary to turn it to account. It is not books that we want to preserve, it is the mind of man; not the receptacles of thought, but the faculty of thinking. Were it necessary to choose between the whole experience which has been acquired and collected from the beginning of time, the whole rich store of human wisdom, and the more unschooled activity of the human mind, the latter ought, without hesitation, to be preferred. This is the precious and living germe which we ought to watch over, to foster, to guard from every blight. This alone, if it remain uninjured, will repair all losses; while, on the contrary, mere literary wealth will not preserve one faculty, nor sustain one virtue.

For more than ten centuries the Greeks of Byzantium possessed models in every kind, yet they did not suggest to them one original idea; they did not even give birth to a copy worthy of coming after these master-pieces. Thirty millions of Greeks, the surviving depositaries of ancient wisdom, made not a single step during twelve centuries in any one of the social sciences. There was not a citizen of free Athens who was not better skilled in the science of politics than the most erudite scholar of Byzantium; their morality was far inferior to that of Socrates; their philosophy to that of Plato and Aristotle, upon whom they were continually commenting. They made not a single discovery in any one of the physical sciences, unless we except the lucky accident which produced the Greek fire. They loaded the ancient poets with annotations, but they were incapable of treading in their footsteps; not a comedy or a tragedy was written at the foot of the ruins of the theatres of Greece; no epic poem was produced by the worshippers of Homer; not an ode, by those of Pindar. Their highest literary efforts do not go beyond a few epigrams, collected in the Greek Anthology, and a few romances. Such is the unworthy use which the depositaries of every treasure of human wit and genius made of their wealth, during an uninterrupted course of transmission for more than a thousand years.

The Italians, like the Greeks, might have been in possession of a store of literary riches bequeathed by their ancestors; but they had neglected them, and no longer knew their value. But, on the other hand, they had the life and activity wanting in their neighbours. In the chaos of the middle ages, their minds acquired force and fire;—*incalvére animi*—the apt motto of the learned Muratori, who has so much contributed to introduce or-

der into that chaos. A strong and universal fermentation was forcing effete and inert matter into new life. The expeditions of the three Othos into Italy are but short episodes in the history of that country; their stay there was short; they came as foreigners and conquerors, and the most extensive views, the highest virtues, in a foreign ruler, cannot prevent the degradation and degeneracy which are the inevitable consequences of his dominion. But, in spite of their German armies,—almost under the swords of their soldiers,—the republican spirit sprang up on every hand. The Italians convinced that they had nothing to hope from the empire, sought support in themselves; they formed associations; they promised mutual aid; and no sooner were they united for their common defence, no sooner had they entered into so noble a league, than they began to awaken to feelings of disinterestedness, patriotism, and love of Liberty; and these generous sentiments were big with the germe of every virtue.

Venice, perhaps at that time too nearly assimilated to a monarchical government by the grant of prerogatives to her doge which in succeeding ages she was constantly trying to limit, nevertheless preserved the seeds of a democracy in the haughty independence of her sailors: it was to her navy that she owed her dominion over the Adriatic Sea, and the reduction of all the cities of Istria and Dalmatia under her sovereignty, in the year 997. At the same time, Naples, Gaëta, and Amalfi, repulsing the attacks of the Lombard princes and of the Saracens, as they not long after repulsed those of the Normans, strengthened their authority, covered the ocean with their vessels, collected within their narrow territory an immense population, and wealth enough to excite the envy of Europe; and, in short, gave the world an example of the true dignity of commerce, and of the wise alliance of order and liberty in a well-regulated city. Farther to the north, two other maritime republics, Pisa and Genoa, which were probably also indebted to the Greeks for their municipal institutions, their safety from the barbarians, and their infant prosperity, appeared similarly animated with that spirit of enterprise, that daring courage, which were necessary to the existence of commerce in an age of disorder and violence. Their merchants traded in armed vessels, and were able and ready to defend the treasures which they transported from land to land: their union formed their strength, and love of their country never deserted them in their most distant voyages. They made it their habitual

endeavour to inspire princes and nobles with respect for the name of citizen,—a name despised in courts; they conceived and exemplified to the world a new sort of greatness, wholly different from those which had hitherto obtained consideration. They were thus preparing for those conquests over the Saracens, which a few years later they effected in Sardinia and the Balearic Isles; and for the powerful assistance which in less than a century they afforded to the crusaders. Indeed, at the time of the first crusade, these two cities alone, did more for what was looked upon as the cause of Christianity, than the powerful empires who buried half their population in the sands of Syria and Egypt.

Nor were the cities in the interior of the country—in Lombardy and Tuscany—strangers to this newly kindled spirit. They also had built up their walls, and armed their militia, to repel the ravages of the Hungarians; they already commanded the respect of those very neighbours who had styled themselves their masters. Milan, Pavia, Florence, Lucca, Bologna, refer the origin of their independence and the memory of their first wars to this epoch; several of their ancient buildings give evidence also that the arts revived almost at the same time with liberty. Hardly had their citizens made a trial of their arms, when they strove to produce within their walls an image of that republic of Rome whose memory was at all times so dear and so glorious to Italians. Annual consuls, named by the people, were charged with the command of the army and the administration of justice; the citizens were divided into tribes which usually took their names from the gates of the several cities; the whole people assembled in the public square and were consulted on all important occasions. There they met to determine or declare war, or to elect their magistrates; while a senate, or council of *credenze*, was appointed to guard the public welfare by their prudence.

The happy results of this new dawn of Italian liberty were long thwarted, long retarded, by the fierce wars of the priesthood and the empire: still, the principle of vitality thus reinfused into the human race was so powerful, that each of the new republics thenceforward produced more great and illustrious citizens, more virtuous men, more patriotism and talents, than can be found in the long and monotonous annals of great empires. A century and a half after the point of time at which we have paused, the Lombard league ventured to set limits to arbitrary power; to raise the authority of law above that of arms; and to oppose its citizens

to the knights of Germany, led on by the valiant Frederic Barbarossa. At the same time, these republics afforded a fresh proof of the eternal alliance between moral and intellectual beauty. A new language was assuming shape and consistency, and even before it became sufficiently perfect to express the noble sentiments working in the souls of the people, sculpture and architecture,—themselves languages,—revealed to the astonished view of the barbarous spectator the lofty conceptions hidden in the Italian breast. Three centuries had elapsed since the year 1000; but of these barely one had been a century of liberty to Florence, when Dante appeared, and claimed for genius as lofty a place in letters, as it had gained in arts, in arms, and in the councils of the republics.

With the exception of some cities in the south of Gaul, and in Spain, we must not look, throughout the rest of Europe, for that noble spirit of liberty which was the harbinger of such glorious days to Italy. But another principle, another sentiment, not without grandeur and elevation, pervaded the countries which had made part of the empire of the West, and gave a new character to the approaching ages. This was the spirit of chivalry which distinguished the Franks; not the chivalry of romance, but of history—the exaltation of the sentiment of force and of personal independence.

The spirit of chivalry was peculiar to the nobles; it was in them alone that, at the period we are contemplating, the sentiment of the dignity of man began to revive amongst the inhabitants of the West. We should, however, have a very false conception of that barbarous age, were we to attach to the word nobility those ideas of purity of descent, and antiquity of race, which vanity, aided by the progress of civilization, has since produced or cherished. There was but little thought of genealogy, when family names did not exist; but little thought of the glory redounding from the exploits of ancestors, when there was no history; but little thought of claims to nobility, when all writings or parchments excited the contempt and suspicion of knights unskilled to read, and who trusted no evidence but that of their sword. Nobility was but the possession of territorial property, and to property, power was always united; when either the one or the other was transferred by usurpations or by bastardy, then were the usurper and the bastard admitted into the ranks of the nobility.

Under the early Carlovingsians the nobles had sunk into the lowest degradation; they had desisted from the exercise of arms; abandoning the task of defending the kingdom, they soon became unable to defend themselves; but, from the time that the government ceased to afford protection to any order of society, they found in their wealth a means of defence and security, not in the reach of any other class of men. It is a remarkable fact, that the proportion between the means of attack and of defence always varies in an inverse ratio to the progress of civilization. The more barbarous the times, the more successful is art in protecting man from the aggressions of his fellow-men; on the other hand, the greater the progress made by society, the more do the means of destruction exceed those of preservation. The wealth which belonged to the noble, and which gave him the entire disposition of the industry of his vassals, enabled him, in the first place, to put his own place of abode in a state of security from every attack. But he did not content himself with making his castle an inaccessible retreat; he soon protected his person by moveable fortifications, and, encased in his cuirass, he acquired an immense superiority in physical strength over all poorer than himself, and could brave the resentment of those who were no longer on an equality with him, though they might surround him.

The chances were hardly one in a thousand that the knight, covered with a coat of mail; with a cuirass jointed so as to correspond to every movement of the body; with a buckler which he could oppose to every blow; with a casque which, when its vizor was lowered, enclosed the whole head, could ever be accessible to the sword of a low-born vassal. In combats with men of an inferior class, the knight dealt death around him without running any risk of receiving it; and this very disproportion decided the respective values of the life of a noble, and of a man of mean extraction. A single knight was of more importance than hundreds of the plebeians who were unable to offer him the slightest resistance. But, to obtain full enjoyment of this advantage, besides the necessity of an immense expenditure, an expenditure equal to the cost of arming four or five hundred peasants, he was obliged to keep his strength and address in constant exercise, and to inure his limbs to the weight and constraint of the armour which he could hardly ever lay aside. The baron was forced to renounce all exercises of the mind, all cultivation of the understanding; to spend his life on horse-back, with harness on his back, and in-

cessantly engaged in military exercises. He was thus rendered an agile, vigorous, and invulnerable soldier, and far exceeded in physical strength and ability the hundreds of retainers by whom he was surrounded. He could safely arm them, lead them to battle under his banner, and yet remain their master, since their combined strength was not equal to his.

The immense advantage which the impregnable castles and the knightly armour gave to nobles over *roturiers*, was productive of a great moral evil, by destroying all feelings of brotherhood and equality between man and man. But the pride and consciousness of power with which this same armour inspired the knight when face to face with his equals; the sentiment of independence which it tended to nourish; the confidence in his own importance and in his own rights, with which he became imbued, ennobled the national character, and gave to the Franks, what they had wanted in the preceding century, the consciousness of the dignity of man. Rights equal, independent, and maintained in all their plenitude, soon gave birth to laws provided for their defence, and to a social order calculated for their protection. This new order of things, which guarantied the liberty of the nobles while it secured due subordination on their part; which sanctioned the reciprocal engagements between lord and vassal, was organized towards the end of the tenth century, under the name of the Feudal System. This system maintained itself for nearly three centuries (to the end of the thirteenth,) and, so long as it lasted, produced, in one class of society, the nobles, several effects, which it might have been imagined were to be expected from a republican organization alone. It restored to honour and consideration virtues absolutely exiled from the earth during the preceding ages,—above all, respect for truth, and loyalty to engagements; it refined and reformed morals; it confided to the honour of the stronger sex the protection and defence of the weaker; lastly, it dignified obedience, by placing it on the only honourable basis it can own—the liberty and the interests of all. Great deeds were done, and noble characters were formed by this republic of gentlemen, constituted by the feudal system; but the imagination of romance-writers alone could look for the courtesy and elegance which are the charm of society under these rough and austere forms. The haughtiness of the knight or baron inclined him to a solitary life: without the walls of his castle, whenever he was no longer the first, whenever he received

the law instead of giving it, his pride was wounded or alarmed. Chivalrous life was a life of mutual repulsion; and, with the exception of the rare occasions when the knight was summoned to the courts of justice, to the armies of his suzerain for the space of forty days, or to tournaments, equals in station avoided each other; neither friendship nor social pleasures were made for those times.

The new period of history which opens on us after the year 1000, promises a more abundant harvest both of virtues and of high and brilliant exploits; we may reasonably anticipate more strength and nobility of character, both amongst the republicans of Italy, amongst the knights of France and Germany, and amongst the crusaders. It will, doubtless, be asked, whence it happens that this advantage is well-nigh absolutely denied to the eight centuries we have surveyed; whence it comes, that, amongst a number of nations differing so widely in their customs, opinions, and social condition,—frequently agitated and convulsed by revolutions,—elevated characters are so rare; that virtues are so thinly scattered, that crime is so revolting. It will be demanded, what there was then in common between the pagan emperors, the Christians, and the Musulmans; between the Greeks, the Latins, the Arabs, and the Franks; why perfidy was equally frequent in the chiefs of the armed democracies who conquered Gaul, or in the vicegerents of the prophet in Arabia, as in absolute monarchs.

We answer, that a grand and fundamental difference separates those governments whose spring of action is virtue, from those which are moved by selfishness. The former, which exalt man,—which propose as their aim his moral education, as well as his immediate prosperity,—are rare exceptions in the course of ages: the latter, which degrade mankind, are by far the greater number; and among them we may class all those which subsisted during the earlier portion of the middle ages, notwithstanding their almost endless variety.

In the republics of antiquity, in every constitution worthy of our admiration, it has been the main endeavour of the legislators to produce and foster noble sentiments in the minds of the citizen; to raise his moral dignity; to secure to him that virtue which is dependent on civil institutions, rather than the prosperity which always remains subject to chance. To attain this end, they have held up to every individual a subject for noble

thoughts and generous purposes; an object far more exalted than self, and one to which, they taught him, self was to be sacrificed. This object of the devoted attachment of the ancients, was their country—the united body of their fellow-citizens. Each man learned to feel how infinitely grander and more important than his own interest was this interest of the whole; each man felt that every faculty, every effort of his was due to the body of which he had the honour to form a part; and the sacrifice of self to what is of greater worth than self, is the one grand principle of all virtue.

In all the governments, on the contrary, whose struggles have occupied us during the course of the centuries we have just surveyed, no political principle or sentiment was raised above personal interest: those in whose hands power resided had no object but their own advantage; those who had framed the institutions of society had been actuated by none but self-regarding motives. The saying of a modern despot, “The state is myself,” has been often repeated; but Louis XIV. only expressed the principle of every government whose moving power is egotism. But wo to people and to princes, when the despot of Rome or of Constantinople said, “The state is myself;” when the armed democracy of the Franks, in the sixth century,—when the prelates of the ninth,—when the counts and castellans of the tenth, said, “The state is ourselves!” And honour to the depositaries of power, be they constitutional kings, senators, or citizens assembled to choose their magistrates, when they say, “We belong to the state,” and when they act in conformity with this profession!

If we look for heroism in the eight centuries whose history we have traced, we may, perhaps, find it in the martyrs of the various persecuted sects of religion, who sacrificed themselves for what they believed to be the truth; we may find it in Belisarius, who, long after Rome had become enslaved, had still faith in Roman virtue—still felt that his country had a right to all his services; we may find it in the first followers of Mahomet, who braved every danger to spread the doctrine of the unity of God. But all the rest, whether captains or soldiers, whether conquerors or conquered, fought only for themselves; for their own interest, their own advancement. They might be brave, they might be skilful; but they had no pretensions to heroism. In like manner, kings, ministers, legislators, the founders and the destroyers of empires, might display extensive views, profound policy, a large

acquaintance with men, or with the times; they might even occasionally do good, and, in doing it, might evince genius or prudence; but they did not exhibit virtue,—for the word virtue implies self-devotion, or self-sacrifice; and they saw but themselves: they sought but their own glory, their own greatness, their own security in power, the gratification of their own passions; they sacrificed not themselves to others, but others to themselves; and they esteemed humanity, loyalty, all the virtues, all the nobler affections, of less weight than their personal interests.

This fundamental contrast between virtue and egotism—a contrast which abundantly suffices to mark the classification of different governments, as well as individual actions—does not destroy the philosophical application of the principle of utility. As it is true that morality is the principle of all wisdom, it is necessarily true that the greatest welfare of all is the point towards which both the virtues of all, and the self-regarding calculations of all, equally tend; that, if we abstract individual interests, the aberrations of passion and the influence of circumstances, the two roads followed by virtue and by egotism meet and unite at the same point. Thus it is that virtue itself may, in some sort, be reduced to a matter of personal calculation; thus it is that we can and ought to demonstrate that the sacrifices it commands are in accordance with the general interest. Self-devotion to what may cause the bane, and not the good of mankind, is virtue gone astray; the heroism which sacrifices itself for an end which ought to be avoided, is a dangerous heroism. The moralist and the philosopher may be able to appreciate virtue and heroism so misdirected, according to the principle of utility,—to rectify their direction towards the greatest good of the species. But this principle, which, abstractedly, determines what is good in itself, is not fitted to become the immediate spring of our actions, lest general should give way to personal utility. The governments which have given a vigorous moral education to the human race have begun by showing that the good of all was their object—that its promotion was the duty of every member of the society. While they were inspiring the citizens with this great idea, they called the good of all, *their country*, and taught them devotion to its cause. Rulers like those who have formed the subject of our inquiry, actuated by no other desire than that of retaining a power which they could turn to their own advantage,—of di-

viding among themselves the wealth and the pleasures which that power enabled them to engross,—had no purposes or objects which they could hold forth to the examination or the imitation of mankind; they acknowledged no public utility—the basis of public virtue. They could not, therefore, speak to their subjects of their duties, but only of their personal interests,—of punishments or rewards; and, if they occasionally borrowed the words country, honour, or virtue, (which, though without meaning to them, had, as they saw, such mighty influence over their neighbours,) those words lost their significance, and produced only a transient illusion amongst their subjects.

We have now closed our review of these long and tremendous convulsions—of this desolating revolution in the condition of Europe. We have seen the human race sink from the most brilliant period of glory to that of the most profound degradation; from the period which produced a system of legislation the model of all succeeding lawgivers, down to the most complete absence of law; from the reign of justice to that of brute force. All that constitutes the grace and the happiness of civilized society—poetry, philosophy, moral and theological speculation, the fine arts, the domestic arts—all, after having shone with meridian splendour, had been utterly quenched, destroyed, forgotten. The combined efforts of men seemed inadequate not only to the production of any thing new, but even to the preservation of what actually existed.

It is at this point of complete dissolution of all the elements of society that other historians must take up the thread of human affairs: it will be for them to show men once more conscious of the tie that binds them to their country; once more devoting their lives to the service of their fellow-citizens, and continually gaining new virtues, from self-sacrifice.

The knowledge of what had been swept away before their time will, perhaps, enable us more clearly to understand all that they had to endure and to achieve; but the spectacle of such vast and sweeping destruction suggests other thoughts, more immediately applicable to ourselves. All that we possess at this day was also possessed by the Roman world; and this we have beheld crumble into dust. The waters that once covered the earth may overflow it again. Violence was but the secondary cause of the ruin; the vices of self-interest were the primary

cause: they undermined the dam of the torrent, which, when once let loose, nothing could stop. When the hour was come in which man no longer preferred country before self; when virtue, honour, liberty, were rare prerogatives, without which he learned to exist; then did a world as fair, as glorious, as our own, crumble away: nor would it be easy to assign a reason why the decay of those virtues on which the strength of man is built, should not once more be succeeded by as complete a ruin of his works—as total an eclipse of his glory.

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NEARLY all of the volumes of this work are now before the public, and the reception they have met with is the best evidence that the publishers have fulfilled the promises made at its outset. They have now only to promise, for the editors and themselves, that no exertion shall be spared to render the remaining volumes equal to those already published, and thus sustain the reputation it has acquired. The subscription is large, and increasing; and in those quarters where its circulation is greatest, and where it is best known, there is a constantly increasing demand. The publishers invite the attention of those who may not already have possessed themselves of it, or may not have had an opportunity to become acquainted with its merits, to the following account of the original work, upon which it is based, and which is termed by the *Edinburgh Review*—

THE WORLD-RENOUNDED LEIPZIG CONVERSATIONS-LEXICON.

It was intended to supply a want occasioned by the character of the age, in which the sciences, arts, trades, and the various forms of knowledge and of active life, had become so much extended and diversified, that no individual engaged in business could become well acquainted with all subjects of general interest; while the wide diffusion of information rendered such knowledge essential to the character of an accomplished man. This want, no existing works were adequate to supply. Books treating of particular branches, such as gazetteers, &c. were too confined in character; while voluminous Encyclopædias were too learned, scientific, and cumbrous, being usually elaborate treatises, requiring much study or previous acquaintance with the subject discussed. The conductors of the *CONVERSATION LEXICON* endeavored to select from every branch of knowledge what was necessary to a well-informed mind, and to give popular views of the more abstruse branches of learning and science; that their readers might not be incommoded, and deprived of pleasure or improvement, by ignorance of facts or expressions used in books or conversation. Such a work must obviously be of great utility to every class of readers. It has been found so much so in Germany, that it is met with everywhere, among the learned, the lawyers, the military, artists, merchants, mechanics, and men of all stations. The reader may judge how well it is adapted to its object, from the circumstance, that though it now consists of twelve volumes, seven editions, comprising about ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND COPIES, have been printed in less than fifteen years. It has been translated into the Swedish, Danish and Dutch languages, and a French translation is now preparing in Paris.

In the preparation of the American edition, no expense has been spared to secure the ablest assistance, and the editors have been aided by many gentlemen of distinguished ability.

The American Biography, which is very extensive, has been furnished by MR. WALSH, who has long paid particular attention to that branch of our literature, and from materials in the collection of which he has been engaged for some years. For obvious reasons, the notices of distinguished Americans are confined to deceased individuals: the European biography contains notices of all distinguished living characters, as well as those of past times.

The articles on Zoology and the various branches of Natural Science, and those on Chemistry and Mineralogy, have been prepared expressly for this work by gentlemen distinguished in the several departments.

In relation to the Fine Arts, the work is exceedingly rich. Great attention was given to this in the German work, and the Editors have been anxious to render it, by the necessary additions, as perfect as possible.

To gentlemen of the Bar, the work will be peculiarly valuable, as in cases where legal subjects are treated, an account is given of English, French, German and American Law.





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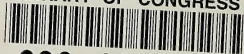
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